



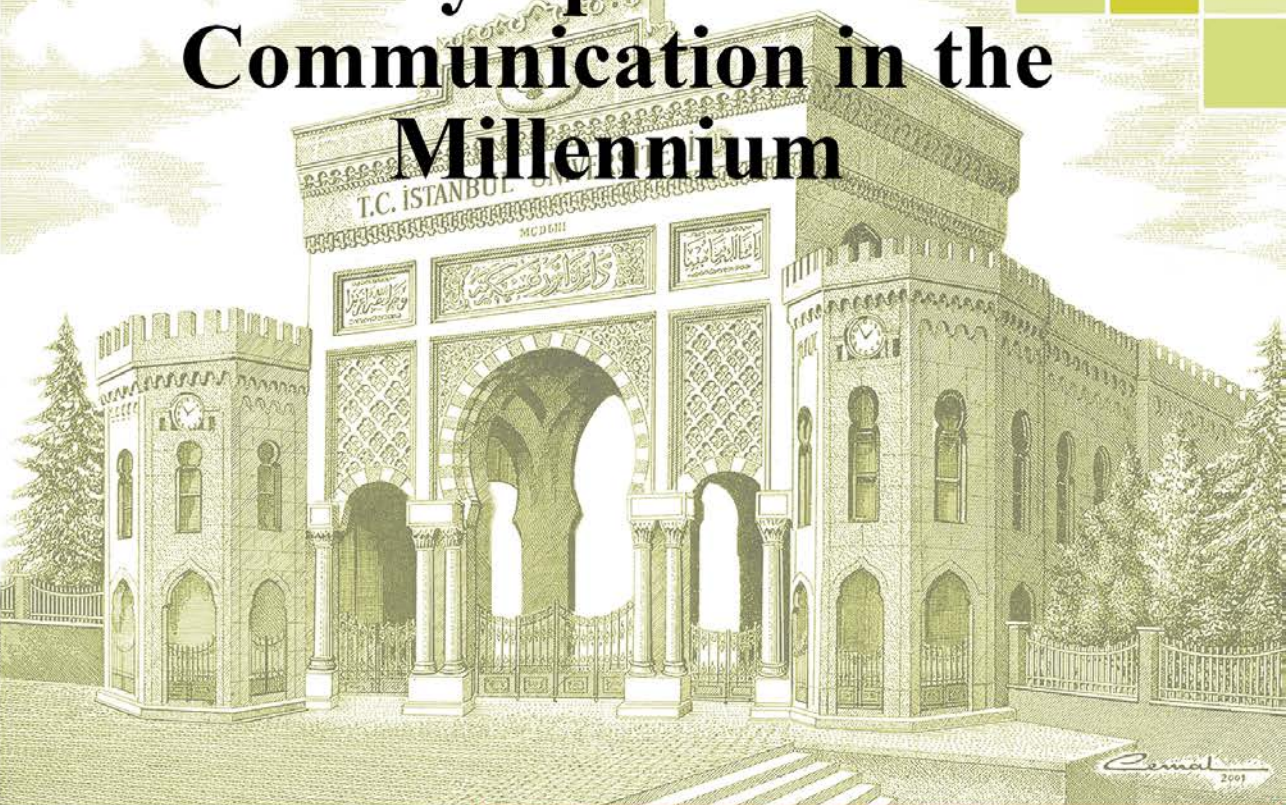
# 14<sup>th</sup> International Symposium Communication in the Millennium

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"A dialogue between  
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## 14<sup>th</sup> International Symposium Communication in the Millennium



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# **14<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM COMMUNICATION IN THE MILLENNIUM**

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# ETHNOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTARY IN DESCRIBING THE CULTURE

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## **Abstract**

*Ethnographic film is focussed on a specific culture and it intends to describe the culture and the related appearances. The aim of this study is to describe what ethnographic documentary means and to announce that an ethnographic documentary film describes the culture. Firstly, ideas about ethnographic film are referred in this study. The qualifications and genres of the documentary film are taken and the ethnographic documentary film is considered as a genre that contains describing and also representing the culture. Karl G. Heider sets the framework of ethnographic films so Heider's criterias will be used for analysing the study samples. Samples of ethnographic films are analysed and brought out the structure of these samples in describing culture that it mentioned from all around the world for the last ten years. The importance of this study is that such a study has rarely been occurred in the field.*

**Keywords:** *Ethnographic film, Ethnographic documentary film, Describing the culture*

# **ETHNOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTARY IN DESCRIBING THE CULTURE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

A documentary, by its very structure and function, records reality as it is. Within a social context, however, the documentary serves to shed light on a society's past and to enlighten the future by recording a society's present standing. In effect, a documentary functions as the memory of societies, as it covers their past, present and future.

Ethnographic documentaries transmit the culture it adopts as a subject using the methods and techniques specific to the ethnography discipline and to the features of documentary film. The concept of culture includes all of a society's material and spiritual elements, such as their lifestyle, way of thinking, etc. Ethnographic documentaries are tools that transmit these elements and as such they have a crucial function insofar as they record a society's, a community's or a group's culture and passes it on to future generations.

The word ethnography, derived from the integration of the Greek words "ethno" (meaning a tribe, family or nation) and "graphos" (meaning writing), refers to a written report regarding a community. Its Turkish equivalent is "budunbetim". These writings have been sources of information on cultures and societies for a long time; in recent years, researchers from the fields of social sciences and communications have begun to apply the practice of ethnography to communication studies. Ethnographic research focuses on the question, "What culture does a given group of people have?" This indicates that ethnography is centered on the idea of culture. The operative hypothesis governing ethnographic research is that every human group that coexists for a certain period of time develops a culture (Mutlu, 2004: 193).

The aim of this study is to describe the meaning of an ethnographic documentary and to show how an ethnographic documentary film describes the culture. The qualifications and genres of documentary film are presented, with a focus on how the ethnographic documentary film in particular is a genre that describes and also represents the culture. As Karl G. Heider has set the framework for ethnographic films, his criteria will be used for analyzing the selected

samples, which have attracted widespread attention throughout the world over the last ten years. In this analysis, the structure of these samples in describing culture will be identified.

### **Ethnographic Film**

Jay Ruby, one of the most important names in anthropology, published a manifesto that defines ethnographic film, primarily through an anthropological perspective. According to Ruby, ethnographic film is an artistic action that can serve the purposes of anthropology. Ethnographic films, however, do not transmit ethnographic information through illustration, but rather are produced by professional film directors who have little or no knowledge of anthropology, or by anthropologists who simply follow the dictums of scientific realism, without adding much in the way of their own thoughts. The following lists the features necessary for cinematic productions to transmit the purposes of anthropology:

1. Ethnographic cinema (EC) should be directed by sociocultural anthropologists with an academic background or career. EC can only result from ethnographic research, which includes professional academic discourse, conducted by educated ethnologists. EC should be an extension of studies carried out by anthropologists, intellectuals and researchers.
2. EC should be demonstrably anti-realist and anti-positivist, kept separate from the rules of scientific realism and utilize all fiction or non-fiction cinematic forms.
3. EC should strive to increase the power of agency of those viewed by using techniques such as polyphony and should accept the moral significance of authorship when attempting to decenter the authority of the producer.
4. EC should view the limits of visual media as a sign of anthropologic expression.
5. If it can achieve, EC will at first confuse the audience. Therefore, it is important that the producers be aware of this and to help the audience understand.

6. If EC should avoid commercial restrictions, it should have low production values, budgets and costs. EC does not yield economic profits. In other words, no one can earn their living from producing EC, as the job solely involves the researcher wishing to communicate with academic knowledge.
7. EC should avoid the economic dictums placed on them by agencies that accept popularly accessible products put out by public and state television, and by the distribution companies that release the income-generating works. New financial resources and distribution opportunities should be created.
8. EC accepts that still there is an insufficient number of existing film festivals and other projection centers are still insufficient. New venues, where, in addition to the showing of the documentary, the discussions arising from these studies in anthropological discourse can take place, should be sought (Ruby, 2005: 79-80).

Ethnographic film should be evaluated in terms of its relationship with ethnography, a scientific initiative. As films about humans can be referred to as ethnographic films, even those films whose primary subject is humans, but which show clouds or lizards, for example, nonetheless provide some information on a culture and its members, such as how people describe things, who uses these things, or how they use these things. Films that include only a few ethnographic elements still have the ability to establish significant connections with an ethnologist. The most important feature of ethnographic films is the extent to which they are able to be produced with an ethnographic understanding. Limiting the definition of ethnography to several words is problematic; therefore, it is best to analyze its features as they relate to the understanding of making an ethnographic film. First of all, the term ethnography can generally be defined as the detailed description and analysis of human behavior based on a long-term observation study (Heider, 1976: 6).

It is important to note that the images of the culture in question should not be described using verbal materials, but instead should be observed and recorded within the society they exist.



## ETHNOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTARY

Ethnographic documentaries generally use the essential elements characterizing the conceptions of documentary and ethnography. In other words, they record the 'human' area using the documentary principle of recording the 'existing'.

In observational studies, where fields or areas of life are recorded, documentation can be made through participatory observation, interviews and other research methods offered by the social sciences. Ethnographic documentaries are produced by recording the life and the existing things in a certain place. The ethnographic characteristic of ethnographic documentaries becomes apparent at the point where it covers a given culture in question and its visible and invisible aspects, and uses the study principles prescribed by ethnography. Documentary directors start their work by taking into consideration the principles governing the production and content of documentaries. This indicates that ethnographic documentaries consist of many components beyond that of simply recording the culture in question.

The definition of ethnographic film also serves as the description of ethnographic documentaries, since ethnographic films, as discussed in the literature, are synonymous with ethnographic documentaries. One important distinction needs to be noted here however; that is, ethnographic documentaries are based on the ethnographic film's principle of describing the culture in question, including all of its elements, and thereby adopts the documentary mentality. A film should meet certain primary criteria in order for it to be defined as an ethnographic documentary:

1. The film should have an ethnographic character, which means the material used belongs to a culture, social structure or group.
2. All kinds of humanitarian elements should be transmitted by using scientific techniques and methods within a social or cultural context.
3. The film should aim to identify the existing life being studied on the basis of documents.
4. Ethnographic documentaries should not ignore film aesthetics, since documentaries function as both a recorder and a film. Otherwise stated, ethnographic documentaries should record the truth in such a way that

it best reflects the natural character of a subject to the extent allowed by documentaries.

Heider (1976) described ethnographic film as film that reflects an ethnographic understanding. But ethnographic film means more than just ethnography plus film, rather it combines the characteristics of documentary and ethnography. The following lays out the process involved in creating an ethnographic film:

- Once the decision has been made to produce an ethnographic documentary, the director, producer, cameraman, director of cinematography, sound operators, lighting technicians, editing operators, script writer, transportation team, catering team, etc. all must be selected before the preparation begins. Teams must then be assembled and equipment procured.
- An ethnographic documentary should begin by centering on what it wants to tell; in other words, deciding on the subject. The preliminary research starts immediately after deciding what will be told. Any information about the culture in question is analyzed in detail. A search should be conducted for sources that express different points of view on the culture in question, as this will enrich the subject.
- The locations where the shootings will be made should be determined according to the preliminary research conducted to acquire information on the culture in question and its elements. This determination of location is essentially a decision about the platforms on which the shootings will be made, since documentary films do not involve the creation of scenarios.
- Before starting the shootings, ethnographic analyses should be carried out. Answers to the questions of What? How much? For what? and How? should be known, as these answers will facilitate the development of a framework for the ethnography of the culture in question.
- The ethnographic framework for the documentary is drawn up by using ethnographic research methods. Various methods are used to understand, describe and transmit a culture, such as performing interviews with members of that culture, distributing questionnaires to them and observing through participation in an existing group or community.

Along with the visual elements, verbal elements of that culture are also recorded by taking stock of the oral history and testimony of the people and by bringing the past to light.

- These elements are recorded by taking into account the events, situations, spaces and entire living area of the community to be filmed, as well as the elements constituting this space; that is, the traditions, customs, religious rituals, clothes, foods and beverages, marriage rites, family structure, child rearing practices, death rituals, language, arts, economic life, daily life, habits, behaviors, institutions, organizations and visions of the past and future, etc., without trying to “tell everything about everything” as Heider warned.
- After the shootings are completed, the next step is to perform the required fictional processes, as ethnographic documentaries use the language of film, without compromising the characteristics of a documentary.
- After all main and intermediary processes are duly fulfilled, the ethnographic documentary waits for its audiences, who will have the opportunity to behold the visual ethnographic film language (Heider, 1976: 8).

Ethnographic documentaries unite ethnography, or ethnographic film language, with documentary. While it basically functions as a documentary, the ethnographic documentary also has the added task of re-presenting an ethnic structure, group, community, or society as is, through its own reality.

The history of ethnographic film, in addition to being part of the history of documentary and non-fiction films, falls under the history of cinematography. Ethnography emerged together with the film in the 19th century, and they reached their maturity in the 1920s. However, effective systematic cooperation was never established between ethnography and film until the 1960s. The earlier acceptances of ethnography had little effect on film and ethnography. It wasn't until later years, in the 1960s and beyond, that developments began to be seen in the United States of America, France and Australia, and on a slightly lower scale, in England. Countries with strictly academic fields of anthropology and a successful film industry, such as Japan, India, and Sweden, did not make significant contributions to ethnographic film. Even Germany, despite housing the Encyclopaedia Cinematographica archive, did not make any significant contributions to these developments. For the first 40 years of ethnographic film,

major contributions came largely from those outside the film industry or anthropology (Heider, 1976: 16).

If a culture or community is documented through film or photographs, it is important that certain steps be taken. First, all kinds of written or visual data about that culture should be accessed and analyzed for visual documentation. The people who will produce the documentary or ethnological study should meet and spend time with the community or group in question; in other words, they should engage in participatory observation (Susar, 2004: 146-147).

In an ethnographic documentary, the cameraman and ethnologist - if s/he will be involved in the production of the film - should work in coordination with each other. The cameraman is responsible for transferring the documentary characteristics of the film, while the ethnologist is tasked with transferring its ethnographic characteristics. Walter Dostal grouped the relationships into three steps:

- A – The status of the cameraman and ethnologist within the said community.
- B – The origin of the socio-cultural identity of the native assistant (socio-cultural status)
- C – Mutual relationships; the following should be analyzed more closely and in detail at this step:
  - 1- Coordination of the ethnologist and cameraman,
  - 2- Coordination of the ethnologist and native assistant
  - 3- Coordination of the cameraman and native assistant (Aydın, Kayhan, 1979: 86).

The functions of ethnographic film are divided into three categories: cultural documentation as ethnographic research, anthropological film for education, and cultural drama film for public consumption and profit. Such variety can make it difficult to bring these types of film into focus. (Balıkcı, 1988: 32). Can all of these categories include ethnographic integrity? Putting the criticisms aside, it can be said that ethnographic films include an ethnographic understanding as the driving force. Steps based on securing reality and naturalism are taken throughout

the discipline of visual anthropology. Film research methods require responsibility and the generation of images that are able to be researched. In short, all spaces should be kept completely intact, in proper temporal order, and based on a contextual relationship. If this order is seriously disrupted, ethnographic integrity will also be seriously damaged (Collier, 1988: 85-86).

Karl G. Heider developed a comprehensive schema to show the characteristics of ethnographic film, stating “All films that define themselves as ethnographic films have a number of common characteristics. Each characteristic carries a unique value that makes a film either less or more ethnographic compared to another film. The “ethnographicity” of a film is assessed according to the application of each of these defining characteristics, the results of which make some films more ethnographic than other films” (1976: 46). The criteria that provide the ‘ethnographic basis’ have been put forward by Heider. These criteria are laid out in a table, where the presence of a stronger ethnographic basis is indicated by a movement from left to right on the table, and determine the framework defining the status of ‘being ethnographic’ for documentaries (Ethnographic Basis, see Table 1).

## **AIM AND METHODOLOGY**

The primary aim of this study is to describe today’s ethnographic documentary. Analyses were conducted in terms of the degree to which the characteristics advanced by Karl G. Heider (1976) to define ethnographic film were consistent with ‘being ethnographic’. Applying the descriptive method, the study analyzes films produced by students in the Culture and Media program at New York University’s Department of Anthropology. Various documentaries are included in the category of ethnographic film, but for this study, only ethnographic documentaries in particular formed the study population. From this population, documentaries that centered on culture and cultural elements, specifically those that focus on the transference of culture and cultural elements, were selected for the study sample. The governing approach to this study was based on studies describing culture which had been published in the last ten years.

It was decided that the samples of this study be selected from the documentary films produced, directed, and shot by students in the Culture and Media program at New York University’s Department of Anthropology on the

grounds that the students' goal was to create ethnographic documentary films that integrated the tenets of anthropology and documentary. The students produced the documentaries as part of the year-long seminar on ethnographic documentary video production, the capstone of the Culture and Media program. The first portion of the course is dedicated to instruction, exercises, and reading to familiarize students with the fundamentals of video production and their application to a broad conception of ethnographic and documentary approaches (Ethnographic Documentary Film, 2016).

The sample ethnographic films, which have attracted world-wide attention over the last ten years, were examined, and their structures, as they relate to describing culture, were analyzed. Below, a brief description of the samples is provided in order of time, from 2006 to 2016, along with the names of the directors:

## **2006**

Nothing to Lose (by Robert Chang): This film introduces viewers to a group of fat New Yorkers who are trying to make The Big Apple a better place for people of all shapes and sizes. "I'm on Strike Because..." (by Steve Fletcher): This film gives an accurate description of the reasons workers go on strike, using a nuanced, complex style. I Found This Tape (by Christopher Fraga): This film is about Brian Belott, an artist working in New York, and describes the idiosyncratic motivation, nurtured since his youth, that has been behind the labor and the passion he has invested in "finding" art. Taming the Gaze (by Sorayya Kassamali): This filmic meditation on the Bronx Zoo examines our conventional ways of seeing exotic, endangered animals in artificially created habitats. The Professor (by Jason Price): This film is about Professor David Kpormakor, who served as interim President of Liberia during its disastrous civil war. Mamun's Hot Dogs (by Damien Stankiewicz): This film follows Mamun, a hot dog vendor and recent Bangladeshi immigrant. At the Bottom of the Deep Blue Sea (by April Strickland): This film follows a group of experienced scuba divers as they navigate through the pleasures and dangers of their craft. Dream Theater (by Andrew Ventimiglia): This film follows a community as they discuss, perform, honor and pursue their dreams. Costume Play (by Ray Vichot): This film, which introduces audiences to Cosplay (or "costume play"), a vital activity in the world of Japanese animation fandom, follows Jose Rivera from Brooklyn to Washington D.C.

## 2007

Smoke Screen (by Wazhmah Osman ): This film sets out to find the stories and life circumstances of people who have been burnt out of their homes and in the process introduces the community groups who have come together to challenge the larger forces that are changing their cityscape. Great Aunt Gloria (by Sabra Thorner): This film explores how memories of the past inform present understandings of ourselves and our loved ones. Heart and Skull (by Lauren Kogen ): This shows that optimism and imagination are essential survival tools for independent artists. Arpa Viajera (by Orlando Lara): This film is about the performances staged in the subways and on the city streets of New York City. Eau de Parfume (by Sara Rashkin ): This film seeks to change the way you see that little bottle of perfume on the counter.

## 2008

Henington Press (by Neal Solon): This film focuses on a family business that opened in 1912, and shows how the technology it employs is on the verge of disappearing. Grannies against the War (by Nina Krstic): A group of elderly women explore what it means to be anti-war activists in present-day America. Mystery Shop (by Anoosh Tertzakian): A film about what a neighborhood can't live without. Singer with the Band (by Heather Weyrick): This film explores what television can teach us about diversity and what it is like to be a performer with a developmental disability. No Such Thing as a Free Lunch (by Tate LeFevre): Freegans, a group of anti-capitalist, anti-consumerist activists—best known for eating food found in the garbage—struggle to represent themselves and their mission in the mainstream media. My Mom's Name is Jean (by Myles David Jewell): A film about the efforts it takes to survive in life.

## 2009

Separation Anxiety (by Alison Cool): An exploration into the secret world of twins, where jealousy and self-consciousness compete with the strange comfort of never being alone. Fashioning Faith (by Yasmin Moll): This film focuses on Muslim clothing designers in New York City. Local Celebrity (by Geoff Agnor): This film follows a few public characters on Church Avenue, the heart of Kensington. The Brothers of Kappa Pi (by Roberto Reyes Ang): The story of a fraternity based in Queens, New York.

## 2010

The Beloved Witness (by Dwaipayan Banerjee): This film looks back at Shahid's life in exile in America. Citizenship Archive (by Eugenia Kisin): This film explores the question of what the colonial archive remembers — and what it forgets. Tonto Plays Himself (by Jacob Floyd): While researching American Indian actors in Depression-era Hollywood, aspiring Native filmmaker Jacob Floyd finds a surprising and unknown personal connection to a strange footnote in Hollywood history. Sweet Clover, a homecoming (by Jen Heuson): This film unravels the landscapes of memory, nostalgia, and imagination. First Voices (by Amalia Córdova): This film highlights Tiokasin's efforts to build awareness of the Native experience through media and art. Buggin' Out (by Jamie Berthe): This film looks at bug infestation and embarks upon a quest for answers about one of Mother Nature's most formidable and resilient foes.

## 2011

*You, As Seen on TV* (by Eva Hageman): This film offers a behind-the-scenes look at the making of characters in reality television. *Russia Will Pay for My Funeral: The Lives of Irina Shmeleva* (by Joe Crescente): Explores the life of a Soviet celebrity actress as she negotiates her transition from honored film actress in Moscow to small business owner in New York City. *Shaan Mutiyaaran Di Bhangra Club: The Pride of Women* (by Wenrui Chen): This film introduces audiences to Bhangra, a North Indian folk dance traditionally done by men.

## 2012

*Child's Pose: Yoga in a NYC Public School* (by Rowena Potts): This explores the experiences of several children as they engage in the physical and emotional practice of yoga, both on and off the mat. *More than a Face in the Crowd* (by Sami Chan): This film reveals a larger, untold story of Asian American actors and extras in Hollywood. *The Skin that Burns* (by Narges Bajoghli): Tells the story of Iran's volunteer soldiers, who were exposed to chemical bombs during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88). *On The Cusp, Off the Cuff* (by Nate Dern): This film explores the motivations and dreams of five comedy hopefuls while providing an insider's look into the exclusive New York City improv community.



## 2013

*Don't Take Advice From Hank Williams* (by D. L. Barron): This film follows the organizing efforts of Karen Pittelman and the emergent 'Queer Country' music scene in Brooklyn, New York. *Doing the Sheep Good* (by Teresa Montoya): This film charts the homecoming of films and photographs as Navajo residents plan the very first community screening in over 46 years. *Role Play* (by Christopher Baum): This short film highlights how his kinky skills prove to be an ongoing source of inspiration and opportunity, as well as professional tension. *Singing Jade* (by Bing Wang): This film invites viewers to ponder what it means to grow old as an immigrant and as an artist, with the youthful, musical "jade."

## 2014

*Brooklyn Slice* (by Anna Green): This film paints a portrait of a small, rapidly changing section of Brooklyn. *The Cancer Mirror* (by Sophie Tuttleman): Sophie Tuttleman reflects on her mother's battle with terminal brain cancer. *Ni Aquí, Ni Allá (Neither Here, Nor There)* (by Gabriela Bortolamedi): An undocumented young woman from Mexico navigates the challenges of college as her parents struggle to make ends meet and to support her in the pursuit of her dreams. *A Correspondence* (by Leili Sreberny-Mohammadi): This film brings to life the year-long correspondence between the filmmaker's grandparents during the post-war years. *Cast in India* (by Natasha Suresh Raheja): This short film is a glimpse of the working lives of the men behind the manhole covers in New York City. *Living Quechua* (by Christine Mladic Janney): A migration story. *The Regulars* (by Zoe Graham): This film looks at The Manhattan Three Decker diner, which has been a favorite neighborhood eatery for sixty years. *Food for the Gods* (by Scott Alves Barton): Sacred leaves and food are essential to many Afro-Brazilian religious practices. This film examines the rituals observed for the food dedicated to a deity. *Player 1, Player 2: Gamers in Love* (by Lina M. De Jesús Golderos): This film explores the relationship between couples.

## 2015

*Jimena* (by Ximena Amescua Cuenca): This film follows 'modern' and 'traditional' medicinal practices. *One Man's Trash* (by Kelly Adams): A sto-

ry of one character's path in life collecting various items. His tale encourages viewers to see the things they encounter in daily life in a new light. *Raise and Remember: A Father's Survival Story* (by Katie Leary): This film explores what survival means for this Staten Island father, whose personal memories are part of U.S. History. *What Remains* (by Lee Douglas): This film follows anthropologists Julián García and Jorge Moreno as they track one family's attempt to piece together the effects of political violence. *The Ladies* (by Tyler Zoanni): This observational short offers an evocative portrait of "the ladies" and the work that brings them together.

## 2016

*Thiaroye by the Sea* (by Devin Thomas): Amidst the urban chaos of Dakar--Senegal's urban capital--one young woman struggles to find her voice. *The Bearden Project* (by Chloe Gbai): This film explores the reasons behind the lack of African-American artists on gallery walls. *Island to Island* (by Jacqueline Hazen): The members of the Hawaiian diaspora community are integrating oli into the sounds of the island of Manhattan. *Shásh Jaa': Bears Ears* (by Angelo Baca): This film explores Shásh Jaa' (Bears Ears), which encompasses 1.9 million acres of southeastern Utah wilderness, sacred lands to local Native American tribes. *Archives of Extinction* (by Alyse Takayesu): This documentary evokes questions about de-animating and re-animating forms of life and discusses the human role in disassembling and reassembling past and future ecologies. *The Part of Us that Belongs to God* (by Joseph Livesey): *The Part of Us that Belongs to God* provides an observational portrait of a typical Monday service at Tianfu United Methodist, offering a window into Chinese culture. *Grounded* (by Neta Alexander): This documentary focuses on a Digital Detox weekend retreat in Marble Falls, Texas, where 147 participants re-live their childhood summer camp experience at "Camp Grounded". *The Love Industry* (by Matt Cusimano): This film focuses on how love is constructed in the digital World (Ethnographic Documentary Films, 2016).

## FINDINGS

The films included in the study sample were analyzed in Karl G. Heider's light of criteria of "Ethnographic Basis," "Connection with Written Materials," "All Actions," "All Bodies," "Assessment of Explanations and Interventions," "Basic

Technical Competence,” “Sound Appropriateness,” “Expression Appropriateness,” “Ethnographic Existence,” “Contextuality,” “All Humans,” “Intervention in Film Production: Intervention in Time / Intervention in Continuity,” “Unintentional Intervention in Behavior,” and “Intentional Intervention in Behavior.”

Although they show some structural and linguistic differences compared to the first examples of ethnographic film, the main purpose of these documentary films is to be ethnographic. Today, there are a variety of subjects that cover all kinds of elements of cultural formation. In ethnographic documentaries, in addition to explanatory sources and written materials, witness testimonies are generally preferred to establish connection with the culture being studied. Careful attention must be given to describing all actions and parties within their own context. The sample films used in this study all have the basic technical competence, in terms of sound, image, and expression, as well as the requisite structures that allow intervention in time and continuity, since the samples are short-term productions. It was also very apparent in the selected samples that the directors were aware that they should in no way intervene in the behaviors expressed by the characters in the film.

Although all of the documentaries in this study featured different forms and contents, they are nonetheless able to be gathered under the roof of ethnography. Furthermore, despite their different structures, they all served the same purpose of describing the culture they were addressing. Lastly, not all of the samples showed the same ethnographic intensity, as indicated by being closer to the right on the ethnographicity criteria table (Table 1).

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Ethnographic documentaries transmit the culture it addresses. This study has aimed to define ethnographic documentaries using samples that best embodied their true essence. In the analysis of these sample documentaries, it was found that these ethnographic documentaries transmit the culture they address with an ethnographic understanding. As part of the aim to provide a definition of ethnographic documentaries, the culture-transmitting characteristics were identified and the data was concretized. These sample documentaries, whose stated aim was to describe the culture they were addressing, were found to have the basic characteristics of ethnographic documentaries and thereby serve as

examples of what an ethnographic documentary should be in terms of its various characteristics.

It should be noted that numerous cultural elements are described in different ways, depending on the discipline through which they are being defined. The level of ethnographicity of the documentaries produced with the aim of being ethnographic is the subject for a different debate; nonetheless the fundamental principle is to have an ethnographic understanding. Analyzing the studies in the literature in the light of Karl G. Heider's criteria will help to provide a holistic perspective in future research.

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## TABLES

**Table I: Ethnographic Basis (Heider, 1976)**

<b>Ethnographic Basis</b>	<b>Unaware of ethnography</b>		<b>Formed with a deep ethnographic understanding</b>
Connection with Written Materials	No materials exist	Slightly connected materials	Well-integrated with the published materials
All Actions	Fragmentary, incomplete actions		Beginnings, crucial points and ends.
All Bodies	Extremely fragmented bodies, fragmentary shoulder shots		All required bodies
Assessment of Explanations and Interventions	In the film or Image No information exist	A slight attempt	Sufficient
Basic Technical Competence	Insufficient	Reasonable sufficiency	Great quality
Sound Appropriateness	Inappropriate sound (e.g. orchestra music, slow narration)	Restrained narration	Simultaneous natural sound
Expression Appropriateness	Irrelevant, unnecessary, bombastic		Clarified in the most appropriate way and relevant to the images
Ethnographic Existence	Existence of an ethnologist ignored	Existence of an ethnologist mentioned	Ethnologist shown forming interaction and collecting information
Contextuality	Isolated behaviors out of context	Contextualized gestures	Complete contextuality
All Humans	Unknown identity masses		Developing a sense of individuality
Intervention in Film Production: Intervention in Time Intervention in Continuity	Temporal order re-arranged Simple order mostly established out of shootings of real events	Shortened time	Real time Real, protected order
Unintentional Intervention in Behavior	The highest level	Restrained	The lowest level
Intentional Intervention in Behavior	The highest level	Restrained	The lowest level