

Engaging with the Access Grid as a new data collection tool

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Research Aims

Access Grids as a Data Collection tool

- This research critically explores the utility and effectiveness of Access Grids as a data collection tool.
- To document and analyse the interactional features of AGN-mediated communication, the function of fieldworkers, and the involvement of technicians.

UK Criminal Justice System

- The secondary aim is to gain an understanding of how members of the public feel about the crown courts particularly experiences and views towards being a trial witness.

Using Access Grid Nodes for virtual fieldwork

- Social scientists often collect data by 'fieldwork', using methods like interviews and group discussions.
- These methods are dependent on interactions between respondents and the researcher often involving face-to-face interaction.
- However, face-to-face interaction between researcher and respondent in the same location can be problematic or unfeasible.
- Access Grids offer a cost-efficient alternative.

Face-to-face interaction via Access Grids

Access Grids are designed to resemble interaction between people in the same room:

- Large format images (e.g., of the remote speaker) are used which facilitate the communication of paralinguistic cues.
- High fidelity stereo sound increases the audio quality and unlike videoconferencing has minimal latency.
- Computer images can also be displayed alongside the images of people. This is often useful in social research to facilitate the discussion of a common object such as a photograph, diagram or text during a research interview or focus group.

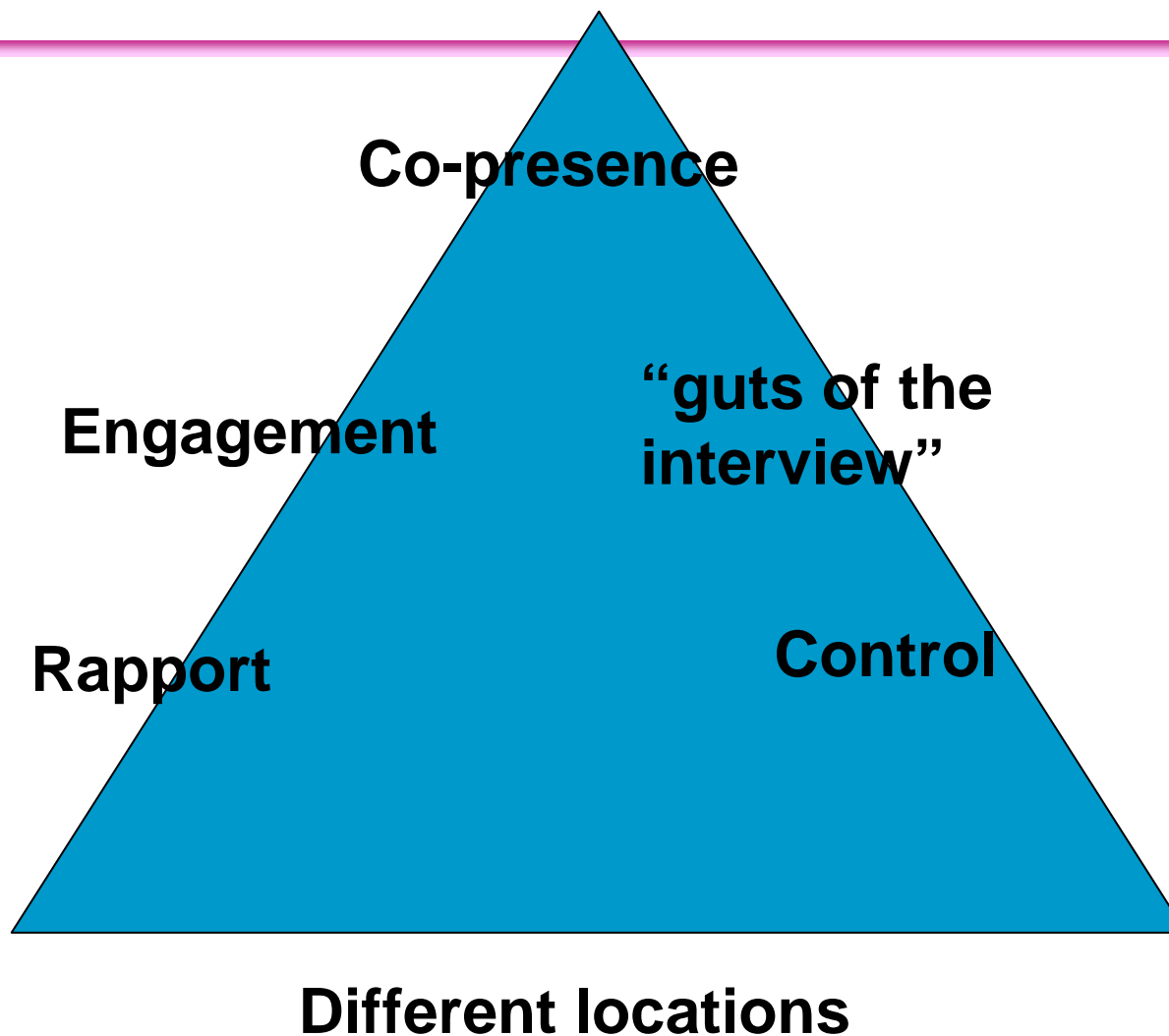
Research Design

- Non-standardised interviews
- Moderator-led discussion groups
- Interview Guide
 - The first half of the schedule is derived from the project director's crown court research on attitudes towards the criminal justice system and witnessing.
 - The second half focuses on the respondent's experience of the interview.
 - Digital audio and video recordings were made of the interviews and focus groups. Access Grid recording software was used where possible.

Preparation

- “How to” guide www.accessgrid.surrey.ac.uk
- Availability of respondents, AGNs & node operators
- Node operators
 - - confidentiality statements
 - - Set up and testing of session
- Information for respondents
 - - accessibility
 - - directions
 - - contact person

Engagement

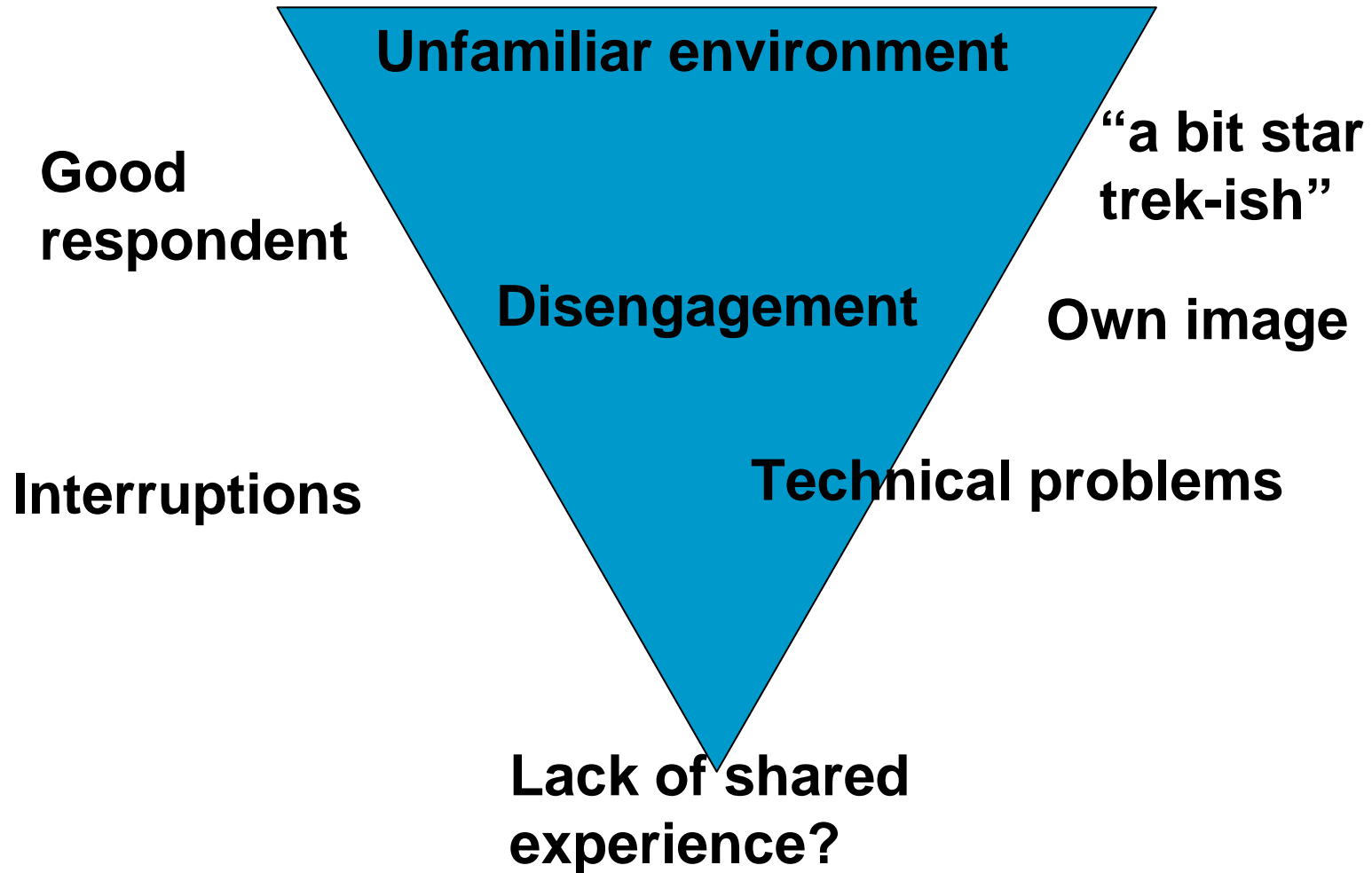


Extract 1: Breaking the rules (R10, female)

“R10: Umm (pause) (looks to her left) Yeah well er I mean I suppose it doesn't feel like you're in Surrey, it does feel like you're just maybe at the top of the room like kind of (points to the end of the room where to the video wall). Err so like you are there. I think at the same time umm it's easier to kind of withdraw you know my eye gaze and that like you know if I'm thinking of a question I can kind of look away // MM: Yeah // R10: because you're just (laughs) // MM: Yes (laughs) // R10: a screen like you know (laughs) // MM: (laughs) // R10: (laughs) as opposed to normal conversation I'd have to keep up that eye contact // MM: Oh Okay // R04 And, And you know manage err manage the interaction a little more - yeah....

R10: So when you're with somebody // MM: Yeah // R10: You do have other cues you know like touch or whatever that you can use as well. Umm but I do feel that I can kind of break the rules of conversation sometimes and just look off (looks to her left to (laughs)// MM: Oh Ok (laughs) // R10: kind of (laughs) // MM: (laughs) // R10: Yeah. So umm // MM: That's interesting // R10: And it would be easier to do that, yeah // MM: Umm”

Disengagement



Shared Experience?

- **Video Clip 3: Shared context, shared experience: Discussion of interruption (R04, female)**
- “MM Why do you think umm being in the same room would be so much more preferable in the interview situation?”
- ...R04 Umm (pause) I don't er, I mean don't know, I just, probably just because of familiarity really. And because we're sharing a space and therefore sharing a level of experience ie when you're in, when the door opens I, - we're both experiencing it // MM Umm // R04 And we both respond to it. And I'm not kind of left 'what's going on?' sort of thing, and it just, from that point of view.”

AGNs as a Data Collection Tool

Respondent's greater
sense of control

No need for travel

“Middle ground”

Technical problems

Feelings of self-
consciousness

Facilitating AGN-mediated fieldwork

- Have a clear rationale for conducting AGN-mediated fieldwork, make this clear to respondents.
- Use statements of confidentiality for all node operators and those providing technical support
- Consider the recording requirement of the data collection. Is unicast functionality needed? Where will the recordings be stored and will this be secure?
- Ensure that you have other 'back up' modes for recording the interviews
- Factor in time and equipment to reformat all recordings if using a CAQDAS package
- Use an index to log all recordings and their format
- Allow time to set up and test the AGNs.
- Arrangements should be made with the remote node operator in the event of severe technical problems

Facilitating AGN-mediated fieldwork

- Where possible cameras should be made less prominent.
- Incorporate strategies to allow respondents to become familiar with the AGN environment.
- Make arrangement for the session not be interrupted by third parties unnecessarily
- Consider whether it necessary for the respondent to be able to see their own image