

The SAGE Handbook of
Qualitative Business
and Management
Research Methods



Edited by
Catherine Cassell,
Ann L Cunliffe
and Gina Grandy



About the pagination of this eBook

This eBook contains a multi-volume set.

To navigate this eBook by page number, you will need to use the volume number and the page number, separated by a hyphen.

For example, to go to page 5 of volume 1, type "1-5" in the Go box at the bottom of the screen and click "Go."

To go to page 5 of volume 2, type "2-5" ... and so forth.

The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods



Sara Miller McCune founded SAGE Publishing in 1965 to support the dissemination of usable knowledge and educate a global community. SAGE publishes more than 1000 journals and over 800 new books each year, spanning a wide range of subject areas. Our growing selection of library products includes archives, data, case studies and video. SAGE remains majority owned by our founder and after her lifetime will become owned by a charitable trust that secures the company's continued independence.

Los Angeles | London | New Delhi | Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne

The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods



History and Traditions

Edited by
Catherine Cassell, Ann L. Cunliffe
and Gina Grandy

 **SAGE** reference

Los Angeles | London | New Delhi | Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne



Los Angeles | London | New Delhi
Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne

SAGE Publications Ltd
1 Oliver's Yard
55 City Road
London EC1Y 1SP

SAGE Publications Inc.
2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, California 91320

SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd
B 1/I 1 Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area
Mathura Road
New Delhi 110 044

SAGE Publications Asia-Pacific Pte Ltd
3 Church Street
#10-04 Samsung Hub
Singapore 049483

Editor: Kirsty Smy
Editorial Assistant: Colette Wilson
Production Editor: Sushant Nailwal
Copyeditor: Sunrise Setting Ltd.
Proofreader: Sunrise Setting Ltd.
Indexer: Sunrise Setting Ltd.
Marketing Manager: Emma Turner
Cover Design: Wendy Scott
Typeset by Cenveo Publisher Services
Printed in the UK

At SAGE we take sustainability seriously. Most of our products are printed in the UK using FSC papers and boards. When we print overseas we ensure sustainable papers are used as measured by the PREPS grading system. We undertake an annual audit to monitor our sustainability.

Introduction & editorial arrangement © Catherine Cassell, Ann L. Cunliffe and Gina Grandy, 2018

Chapter 01 © Catherine Cassell, Ann L. Cunliffe and Gina Grandy, 2018
Chapter 02 © Ning Su, 2018
Chapter 03 © Robert P. Gephart, Jr., 2018
Chapter 04 © Barbara Simpson, 2018
Chapter 05 © Wharerata Writing Group, 2018
Chapter 06 © Angelo Benozzo, 2018
Chapter 07 © Jose F. Molina-Azorin, 2018
Chapter 08 © Alia Weston and J. Miguel Imas, 2018
Chapter 09 © Nancy Harding, 2018
Chapter 10 © Bettina Schneider and Bob Kayseas, 2018
Chapter 11 © Gina Grandy, 2018
Chapter 12 © Leah Tomkins and Virginia Eatough, 2018
Chapter 13 © Steve Vincent and Joe O'Mahoney, 2018
Chapter 14 © Andrea Whittle, 2018
Chapter 15 © Judith A. Holton, 2018
Chapter 16 © Alexandra Michel, 2018
Chapter 17 © Sylwia Ciuk, Juliette Koning and Monika Kostera, 2018
Chapter 18 © Giuseppe Scaratti, Mara Gorli, Laura Galuppo and Silvio Ripamonti, 2018
Chapter 19 © Fernando F. Fachin and Ann Langley, 2018

Chapter 20 © Chahrazad Abdallah, Joëlle Basque and Linda Rouleau, 2018
Chapter 21 © Rebecca Piekkari and Catherine Welch, 2018
Chapter 22 © Simon Hayward and Catherine Cassell, 2018
Chapter 23 © Sandra Corlett and Sharon Mavin, 2018
Chapter 24 © Fahad M. Hassan, Caroline Gatrell and Carolyn Downs, 2018
Chapter 25 © Amanda Sinclair and Donna Ladkin, 2018
Chapter 26 © Jenny K. Rodriguez, 2018
Chapter 27 © Chris Land and Scott Taylor, 2018
Chapter 28 © Mark N.K. Saunders and Keith Townsend, 2018
Chapter 29 © Giampietro Gobo, 2018
Chapter 30 © Alexandra Rheinhardt, Glen E. Kreiner, Dennis A. Gioia and Kevin G. Corley, 2018
Chapter 31 © Michael D. Myers, 2018
Chapter 32 © Emma Bell and Nivedita Kothiyal, 2018
Chapter 33 © Rebecca Whiting and Katrina Pritchard, 2018

Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of research or private study, or criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, this publication may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form, or by any means, only with the prior permission in writing of the publishers, or in the case of reprographic reproduction, in accordance with the terms of licences issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside those terms should be sent to the publishers.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017939689

British Library Cataloguing in Publication data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-5264-2926-1

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	viii
<i>List of Tables</i>	ix
<i>Notes on the Editors and Contributors</i>	x
1 Introduction: Qualitative Research in Business and Management <i>Catherine Cassell, Ann L. Cunliffe and Gina Grandy</i>	1
PART I INFLUENTIAL TRADITIONS	15
2 Positivist Qualitative Methods <i>Ning Su</i>	17
3 Qualitative Research as Interpretive Social Science <i>Robert P. Gephart, Jr.</i>	33
4 Pragmatism: A Philosophy of Practice <i>Barbara Simpson</i>	54
5 Critical Management Studies <i>Wharerata Writing Group</i>	69
6 Poststructuralism <i>Angelo Benozzo</i>	86
7 Mixed Methods <i>Jose F. Molina-Azorin</i>	102
8 Resisting Colonization in Business and Management Studies: From Postcolonialism to Decolonization <i>Alia Weston and J. Miguel Imas</i>	119
9 Feminist Methodologies <i>Nancy Harding</i>	138
10 Indigenous Qualitative Research <i>Bettina Schneider and Bob Kayseas</i>	154
11 An Introduction to Constructionism for Qualitative Researchers in Business and Management <i>Gina Grandy</i>	173

12	Hermeneutics: Interpretation, Understanding and Sense-making <i>Leah Tomkins and Virginia Eatough</i>	185
13	Critical Realism and Qualitative Research: An Introductory Overview <i>Steve Vincent and Joe O'Mahoney</i>	201
14	Ethnomethodology <i>Andrea Whittle</i>	217
15	From Grounded Theory to Grounded Theorizing in Qualitative Research <i>Judith A. Holton</i>	233
PART II RESEARCH DESIGNS		251
16	Researching Bodies: Embodied Fieldwork for Knowledge Work, Which Turns Out to Be Embodied <i>Alexandra Michel</i>	253
17	Organizational Ethnographies <i>Sylvia Ciuk, Juliette Koning and Monika Kostera</i>	270
18	Action Research: Knowing and Changing (in) Organizational Contexts <i>Giuseppe Scaratti, Mara Gorli, Laura Galuppo and Silvio Ripamonti</i>	286
19	Researching Organizational Concepts Processually: The Case of Identity <i>Fernando F. Fachin and Ann Langley</i>	308
20	Designing Strategy as Practice Research <i>Chahrazad Abdallah, Joëlle Basque and Linda Rouleau</i>	328
21	The Case Study in Management Research: Beyond the Positivist Legacy of Eisenhardt and Yin? <i>Rebecca Piekkari and Catherine Welch</i>	345
PART III THE RESEARCHER		359
22	Achieving Critical Distance <i>Simon Hayward and Catherine Cassell</i>	361
23	Reflexivity and Researcher Positionality <i>Sandra Corlett and Sharon Mavin</i>	377

24	Muted Masculinities – Ethical and Personal Challenges for Male Qualitative Researchers Interviewing Women <i>Fahad M. Hassan, Caroline Gatrell and Carolyn Downs</i>	400
25	Writing through the Body: Political, Personal, Practical <i>Amanda Sinclair and Donna Ladkin</i>	415
26	Intersectionality and Qualitative Research <i>Jenny K. Rodriguez</i>	429
PART IV CHALLENGES		463
27	Access and Departure <i>Chris Land and Scott Taylor</i>	465
28	Choosing Participants <i>Mark N.K. Saunders and Keith Townsend</i>	480
29	Qualitative Research across Boundaries: Indigenization, Glocalization or Creolization? <i>Giampietro Gobo</i>	495
30	Conducting and Publishing Rigorous Qualitative Research <i>Alexandra Rheinhardt, Glen E. Kreiner, Dennis A. Gioia and Kevin G. Corley</i>	515
31	Writing for Different Audiences <i>Michael D. Myers</i>	532
32	Ethics Creep from the Core to the Periphery <i>Emma Bell and Nivedita Kothiyal</i>	546
33	Digital Ethics <i>Rebecca Whiting and Katrina Pritchard</i>	562
	<i>Index</i>	580

List of Figures

3.1	The multiple layers of the abductive process	39
8.1	Typology of approaches categorizing postcolonial vs colonial research	124
19.1	Example of visual mapping and temporal bracketing (Howard-Grenville et al., 2013)	313
21.1	Eisenhardt's positivist view of the case study	348
26.1	Categorical complexities	446
26.2	Two-step hybrid approach to analysis	450
29.1	The <i>Mmogo-Method</i> TM	502
29.2	A Fulla doll	508

List of Tables

3.1	Framework for qualitative interpretive science research	38
3.2	Qualitative research strategies and methods of analysis for interpretive social science	40
4.1	Three logics of inference	59
13.1	Critical realist research designs (amended from Ackroyd and Karlsson 2014)	207
13.2	CR research strategies, explanations and examples	208
18.1	The grid	298
18.2	Project flow and phases	300
18.3	Synopsis of the AR distinctive features	304
19.1	Four conceptions of process thinking applied to organizational identity	310
20.1	Three profiles of strategy as practice research design	335
23.1	Reflexivity in qualitative research	394
24.1	UK study on motherhood, part-time work and professional careers: Demography and profiles of research participants	410
26.1	Intersectionality themes using qualitative research methods	435
26.2	Examples of intersectional research using qualitative methods	436
28.1	Utility of frequently used non-probability sampling techniques	486
31.1	Audiences and outputs	533
31.2	A writing template (adapted from Myers, 2013)	535

Notes on the Editors and Contributors

THE EDITORS

Catherine Cassell has a longstanding interest in research methodology and the use of qualitative methods in the business, organization, and management fields. She has co-edited four books for Sage on qualitative organizational research and published numerous papers about the uses of qualitative research in the organizational psychology and management field more generally. Her latest text, *Interviews for Business and Management Students*, was published by Sage in 2015. Catherine was the founding chair of the British Academy of Management's Special Interest group in Research Methodology – a group she is still heavily involved with – and a founding member of the steering committee of the European Academy of Management's Special Interest Group in Research Methods and Research Practice. She is inaugural co-editor of *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*: an international journal, and on the editorial boards of numerous other journals. She is a Fellow of the British Academy of Management and an Academic Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. Having previously held a number of senior academic appointments, she is Dean of Birmingham Business School at the University of Birmingham, U.K.

Ann L. Cunliffe is Professor of Organization Studies at Fundação Getulio Vargas-EAESP, Sao Paulo, Brazil. She held positions at the Universities of Bradford and Leeds in the UK, and the Universities of New Mexico, New Hampshire, and California State University in the USA. Ann's current research lies at the intersection of organizational studies, philosophy, and communications, exploring how leaders and managers shape organizational life, selves, and action in living conversations. In particular, she is interested in examining the relationship between language and responsive and ethical ways of managing organizations. Other interests include: leadership, selfhood, qualitative research methods, embodied sensemaking, developing reflexive approaches to management research, practice, and learning. Her recent publications include the book *A Very Short, Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap Book about Management* (2014). She has published articles in *Organizational Research Methods*, *Human Relations*, *Management Learning*, *Journal of Management Studies*, and the *British Journal of Management*. She organizes the biennial Qualitative Research in Management and Organization Conference in New Mexico, USA.

Gina Grandy is Professor and RBC Women in Leadership Scholar with the Hill and Levene Schools of Business at the University of Regina located in Saskatchewan, Canada. Her research interests include leadership, gender and women's experiences at work, stigmatized work, identity, qualitative research methods, and case writing. She is the Associate Editor for the *Case Research Journal* and serves on the international advisory board for *Management Learning* and

Gender in Management: An International Journal. Her research has been published widely in such journals as *Human Relations*, the *Journal of Business Ethics*, the *Journal of Management Studies*, *Gender, Work and Organization*, *Organization, Management Learning*, *Gender in Management*, *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, and the *Case Research Journal*.

THE CONTRIBUTORS

Chahrazad Abdallah is Associate Professor at ESG UQAM in Montreal, Canada. She holds a PhD in Management from HEC Montréal, Canada. Her research focuses on strategizing in pluralistic settings, specifically artistic organizations. She also has a strong interest in qualitative research methods, particularly ethnography. Her current research focuses on creativity as an ambiguous discursive practice. Her work was published in the *Journal of Management Studies*, *Organizational Change Management*, and the *Revue Française de Gestion*.

Ozan Alakavuklar's research is focused on the ethics and politics of organizing, the critical analysis of management education, business schools and non-capitalist forms of organizing, particularly social movements, and community organizing practices. Recently he undertook ethnographic research into the organizing of free food stores. He is a senior lecturer in the School of Management at Massey Business School, based at Albany in Auckland, New Zealand.

Fahreen Almagir's research centers on advancing organizational theory from the perspective of rights and capability of involved and affected communities in response to globalization and sustainable development initiatives. She is Lecturer in Business Ethics at Monash University, Australia, and formerly Postdoctoral Researcher in the School of Management at Massey Business School, New Zealand.

Joëlle Basque is a Research Fellow at HEC Montréal, Canada. She holds a PhD in organizational communication from Université de Montréal and her expertise is in discourse analysis, qualitative research methods, and identity construction processes in organizations. She is currently leading two major research projects with important Canadian organizations to understand the role of organizational identity in strategic planning. Her research interests include the relations between strategic discourses and strategic planning, as well as collective creativity in organizations. So far, she has studied these topics in cultural organizations and police agencies.

Emma Bell is Professor of Organization Studies at the Open University, UK. Her approach to understanding management draws on insights from the social sciences and humanities to critically explore meaning-making in organizations. Key themes include change and organizational loss, learning and knowledge production, and the role of spirituality and belief in organization. Her work has been published in journals including the *British Journal of Management*, the *International Journal of Management*, and *Reviews, Human Relations and Organization*. She has also published several books, including *Reading Management and Organization in Film* (2008), *Business Research Methods* (2015, with Alan Bryman), and *A Very Short, Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap Book about Management Research*

(2013, with Richard Thorpe). Emma is current Past Co-Chair of the Critical Management Studies Division of the Academy of Management and joint Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Management Learning*.

Angelo Benozzo teaches Work and Organizational Psychology and Qualitative Research Methods at the University of Valle d'Aosta, Italy. His current research interests include gender and sexual identity in the workplace and emotion in organizations. He studies these topics using the interpretative key of critical and poststructural and posthuman theories. He has recently published articles in: *Gender, Work and Organizations*; the *Journal of Vocational Behaviors*, *Sexualities*, *Qualitative Inquiry*, and *Cultural Studies* and *Critical Methodologies*. He is currently an Associate Editor of *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*.

Sylwia Ciuk is a Senior Lecturer in Organization Studies at Oxford Brookes Business School, Oxford Brookes University, UK. She is a sociologist whose research interests have been evolving around the issues of power, control, and resistance in organizational change as well as critical perspectives on leadership development. More recently, she has been exploring different aspects of language diversity in subsidiaries of multinational enterprises, particularly in relation to their micro-political dimension. She has authored and co-authored several academic articles and book chapters, both in English and in Polish. Her work has been published in *Management Learning* and the *Journal of Global Mobility*.

Sandra Corlett is a Principal Lecturer in Organization and Human Resource Management at Newcastle Business School, Northumbria University, in Newcastle, UK, and Chair of the British Academy of Management's Special Interest Group on Identity. Her research interests are in identity, vulnerability, manager and follower learning and development, and qualitative research methods. Her work has been published in *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, the *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Management Learning*, and the *Scandinavian Journal of Management*. Sandra is co-editor of a special issue on identity, in the *International Journal of Management Reviews*, and co-editor of a Routledge Studies in HRD text entitled *Identity as a Foundation for Human Resource Development*.

Kevin G. Corley, PhD (Pennsylvania State), is a Professor of Management at the W. P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University, USA. His research largely springs from the question, 'why do people in organizations experience change the way they do?' Answering this question has led Professor Corley to do field research examining the processes by which managers and employees organize around their roles and practices, as well as how they make sense of the changes that occur within their organization. Examining these processes has led him to focus on foundational concepts such as identity, image, identification, culture, and learning. His research has appeared in the *Academy of Management Journal*, the *Academy of Management Review*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Organization Science*, and the *Academy of Management Annals*. He recently served as an Associate Editor at the *Academy of Management Journal* focused on qualitative methods, and helped co-edit a special issue on mixed-methods research at for *Organizational Research Methods*.

Andrew Dickson's research revolves around the use of psychoanalysis to critically consider the structure and function of organizations and institutions, particularly in the 'health' sector.

Methodologically, his focus is on critical qualitative research methods such as autoethnography. He is Senior Lecturer in the School of Management in Massey Business School, based in the Manawatu, New Zealand.

Carolyn Downs is a Lecturer at Lancaster University, UK, and focuses on leading EU-funded research on enterprise and employment with groups vulnerable to social exclusion. She specializes in participatory action research. Carolyn's research has been recognized as having considerable impact, appearing in the *European Commission Handbook of Good Practices for Encouraging Migrant Enterprise* (2016).

Virginia Eatough is a Reader in the Department of Psychological Sciences at Birkbeck, University of London, UK. Her research focuses on the experiential structure of feelings and how individuals ascribe meaning to their emotional experiences. She draws on the philosophies of hermeneutics and phenomenology to explore both the thematic and the tacit, pre-reflective dimensions of interpretation and understanding. Her work has appeared in a range of leading journals, including *The British Journal of Psychology*, *Theory and Psychology*, *Phenomenology and Practice*, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, and *The British Journal of Social Psychology*. She is author of chapters on hermeneutics in *Research Methods in Psychology* (4th Edition), the *Handbook of Qualitative Psychology*, and *Analysing Qualitative Data in Psychology: A Practical & Comparative Guide*, all from Sage.

Fernando F. Fachin is Assistant Professor in the Department of Management and Economics at the Royal Military College of Canada. He obtained his PhD in management at HEC Montréal and has taught at McGill University, Canada. He is a member of the Strategy as Practice Study Group at HEC Montréal and the Research Group on Language, Organization and Governance at Université de Montréal. His research deals with identity, strategy, entrepreneurship, process thinking, and open innovation. He is currently studying the role of space and technology as agents in the organizing process of identity work. He has received and been nominated for awards at the Academy of Management Annual Meeting.

Laura Galuppo is an Assistant Professor in Work and Organizational Psychology at the Psychology Department, Faculty of Psychology, Catholic University of Milan, Italy. Her current research focuses on social sustainability in organizations, organizational learning, collaborative research, and organizational ethnography.

Robert P. Gephart, Jr. is Professor of Strategic Management and Organization at the University of Alberta, Canada, and a Research Associate at IAE Lyon, University of Jean Moulin, France. Dr. Gephart currently serves as an Associate Editor for *Organizational Research Methods* and has published in several respected journals, including *Administrative Science Quarterly*, the *Academy of Management Journal*, the *Journal of Management*, *Qualitative Sociology*, *Organizational Research Methods*, and *Organization Studies*. He is also the author of *Ethnostatistics: Qualitative Foundations for Quantitative Research* (Sage, 1988) and a co-editor of *Postmodern Management and Organization Theory* (Sage, 1996). He received the 2015 Sage Publications / Organizational Research Methods Division Career Achievement Award and has twice been awarded an Academy of Management Journal Outstanding Reviewer Award. He received his PhD from the University of British Columbia, Canada. Dr. Gephart's current interests are qualitative research methods, risk, sensemaking, and ethnostatistics.

Caroline Gatrell is Professor of Organisation Studies at the University of Liverpool Management School, UK. Caroline's research centers on work, family, and health. From a sociocultural perspective, she examines how working parents (both fathers and mothers) manage boundaries between paid work and their everyday lives. In so doing she explores interconnections between gender, bodies, and employment, including development of the concept 'Maternal Body Work'. Her work is published in leading journals including: *Human Relations*; *British Journal of Management*; *Gender, Work & Organization*; *Social Science & Medicine*; and the *International Journal of Management Reviews*. She is Co-Editor in Chief, *International Journal of Management Reviews*.

Dennis A. Gioia is the Robert and Judith Auritt Klein Professor of Management in the Smeal College of Business at Penn State University, USA. He received his doctorate from Florida State University, USA. Prior to his academic career he worked as an engineer for Boeing Aerospace at Cape Kennedy during the Apollo lunar program and for Ford Motor Company as corporate recall coordinator. Current research and writing interests focus on the ways in which identity, image, reputation, and learning are involved in sensemaking, sensegiving, and organizational change.

Giampietro Gobo, PhD, is Professor of Methodology of Social Research and Evaluation Methods, at the University of Milan, Italy. Former Director of the center ICONA (Innovation and Organizational Change in the Public Administration), he was the first chair of the 'Qualitative Methods' Research Network of ESA (European Sociological Association). Consulting Editor of the *International Journal of Qualitative Research in Work and Organizations*, he has published over 50 articles in the areas of qualitative and quantitative methods. His books include *Doing Ethnography* (Sage 2017, 2nd edition, with A. Molle), *Qualitative Research Practice* (Sage 2004, co-edited with C. Seale, J.F. Gubrium and D. Silverman), and *Collecting Survey Data: An Interactional Approach* (Sage 2014 with S. Mauceri). His interests concern the decolonization of methodology, the reduction of inequality in women's scientific careers, and the relationship between quantum physics and social sciences. He is currently undertaking projects in the area of coordination and workplace studies.

Mara Gorli is an Assistant Professor in Work and Organizational Psychology at the Faculty of Economics, Department of Psychology, Catholic University of Milan, Italy. Her main research interests are in organizational learning, in the impact of organizational change on people and relationships, and in reflexivity in organizations. As member of the Center for Research and Studies in Healthcare Management (CERISMAS), she combines organizational research and intervention with a passion for visual, ethnographic, and qualitative methodologies.

Nancy Harding is Professor of Human Resource Management at the University of Bath, School of Management, UK, a rather grand title for someone who started her working life as a typist and working on production lines in factories in the Welsh valleys. Her research and teaching focus on critical approaches to understanding organizations, and her particular interest is working lives. She is an accidental feminist – class had a major influence on her early life, but she found that being a woman restricted her academic career. She has published papers in many of the expected academic journals, and published several books, including an exploration of the social construction of the manager in *The Social Construction of Management: Texts and*

Identities (Routledge, 2003), and the construction of the employee in *On Being at Work: The Social Construction of the Employee* (Routledge, 2013). The construction of the organization, whose publication date is extending into the future, will complete a planned trilogy.

Fahad M. Hassan is a Researcher and Tutor at Lancaster University, UK. Fahad's research centers on career, workplace, and family. He studies the lives of professionals from the socio-cultural perspective of work and family. His published work '(Academic) Leadership Development in Pakistani Universities' (2014) focuses on organizational leadership development processes.

Simon Hayward has an MBA and DBA from Alliance Manchester Business School, UK, and his first degree in English was from Oxford University, UK. He is a leadership expert in the fields of distributed, authentic, and complexity leadership. His first book, *Connected Leadership*, was WHSmith's Business Book of the Month in January 2016, in their top ten for several months, and is distributed internationally. It was shortlisted by the Chartered Management Institute for Book of the Year. He is a regular media commentator on leadership issues, in the press and on television and radio. Simon has worked with major clients in North America, and across Europe and Asia for over 26 years, advising on enterprise leadership issues, developing senior leaders, and designing global change programs. He is CEO of Cirrus, a leading provider of leadership development and assessment services.

Judith A. Holton, PhD, is Associate Professor of Management at Mount Allison University, Canada. In addition to research methodology, her research interests include leadership and management of complex systems, organizational change, and learning and innovation in knowledge work. She has written a number of methodological papers and books about grounded theory and was the founding editor of *The Grounded Theory Review*, a peer-reviewed journal dedicated to classic grounded theory research. She is co-author, with Barney Glaser, of *The Grounded Theory Seminar* (Sociology Press, 2007) and *The Grounded Theory Review Methodology Reader* (Sociology Press, 2012) and, with Isabelle Walsh, of *Classic Grounded Theory: Applications with Qualitative and Quantitative Data* (Sage, 2017). She has also published her work in *Organizational Research Methods*, *Management Learning*, *The Learning Organization*, *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, and *The Grounded Theory Review*.

J. Miguel Imas lectures on organizational-social psychology at the Faculty of Business and Law, Kingston University, UK. He holds a BSc and PhD in Social Psychology from the LSE (UK) and has been visiting professor at the Getulio Vargas Foundation (Brazil) and the University of Chile (Chile). Miguel has undertaken extensive (visual) ethnographic research in Latin America, where he has engaged with indigenous as well as deprived communities and organizations. He has contributed to developing similar research in South Africa and Zimbabwe. His work has been published in several journals on postcolonialism, art-resistance, and bare-foot entrepreneurs.

Bob Kayseas is a Saskatchewan born First Nations scholar from the Fishing Lake First Nation, located in east central Saskatchewan. Bob is the Vice-President Academic and a Professor at the First Nations University of Canada. He obtained a degree in Business

Administration and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Regina and a Ph.D (Enterprise and Innovation) from the Australian Graduate School of Entrepreneurship, Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne, Australia. Bob has established a recognized scholarly program of research centered on Aboriginal entrepreneurship and economic development. He is actively engaged in both the research and practice of entrepreneurship and economic development. Dr. Kayseas is also the Chair of FLFN Ventures Ltd – a corporate entity owned by the Fishing Lake First Nation. The company manages one joint venture with Horizon North Logistics Inc. and Beardy & Okemasis First Nation at BHP Billiton's Discovery Lodge camp near Jansen, Sask.

Juliette Koning is Professor in Organizational Studies at Oxford Brookes Business School, Oxford Brookes University, UK and Research Fellow at the Security Institute for Governance and Leadership in Africa of Stellenbosch University, South Africa. She is a social anthropologist who has two broad research interests: the study of small business organizations in Southeast Asia (particularly those of ethnic Chinese owner-managers) and the study of private security organizations in South Africa and the UK. Driven by her 'anthropological roots', her research explores organizational identity and identity work (gender, age, ethnicity); ethical leadership (religion/belief); small organizations (SMEs, ethnic entrepreneurship), and research methodology (organizational ethnography). She has published in such journals as *Entrepreneurship, Theory & Practice*; *Journal of Business Ethics*; *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*; *Management Learning*; and *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*. Juliette is co-convenor of the Standing Working Group on Organizational Ethnography at EGOS (European Group for Organizational Studies).

Monika Kostera is Professor Ordinaria and Chair of Management at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland, as well as Professor and Chair in Management at Durham University, UK, and Professor at Linnaeus University, Sweden. She holds several visiting professorships. She has authored and edited 40 books in Polish and English, including *Management in a Liquid Modern World* with Zygmunt Bauman, Irena Bauman, and Jerzy Kociatkiewicz (Polity), as well as a number of articles published in journals including *Organization Studies*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior Management*, and *British Journal of Management*. Her current research interests include archetypes, narrative organization studies, ethnography, work disalienation, and the humanistic turn in management.

Nivedita Kothiyal is currently an independent researcher and teaches part-time at the York Management School, University of York, USA. Until recently, she was an Associate Professor at the Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) in India. She holds a PhD in Human Resource Management with over 15 years of experience in research, teaching, consultancy, and training. Her research is interested in decent work, gender and diversity management, workforce development and skill building, and corporate social responsibility. In her research, she draws on postcolonial theory and critical management studies. Her research has been published in field-leading journals, including the *British Journal of Management* and *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations*, and edited volumes including *Managing Alternative Organisations in India* by Cambridge University Press.

Glen E. Kreiner is the John and Becky Surma Dean's Research Fellow in the Smeal College of Business at Penn State University, USA. Professor Kreiner received his PhD from Arizona

State University, USA. He is primarily a qualitative researcher with a special emphasis on grounded theory, but he also publishes conceptual and quantitative research. He studies issues such as identity (at the organizational, occupational, and individual levels), stigma, dirty work jobs, work-home boundaries, and intellectual disabilities in the workplace. He has published in a wide variety of management journals, including the *Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Organization Science*, and *Journal of Applied Psychology* and has served on multiple editorial boards. When he's not playing the role of professor, he enjoys life with his family, gardening, baking, and the theatre.

Donna Ladkin is Professor of Leadership and Ethics at The Graduate School of Management, Plymouth University, UK. A philosopher and musician by background, her approach highlights the esthetic and ethical qualities at the heart of leadership and how it gets done. The role of embodiment in both the performance of leadership and the process of ethical engagement has been a key theme in her research, which is also informed by her practice as a yoga practitioner and teacher. She is the author of *Rethinking Leadership: A New Look at Old Leadership Questions*, *Authentic Leadership: Clashes, Convergences and Coalescences* (co-edited with Chellie Spiller and shortlisted as one of 10 Best Leadership Books of the Year by the International Leadership Association (ILA)), *The Physicality of Leadership* (co-edited with Steven S. Taylor), and *Mastering the Ethical Dimension of Organizations*, which was shortlisted for the CMI's Book of the Year award in 2016.

Chris Land is Professor of Work and Organization at Anglia Ruskin University. His research is particularly concerned with the relationship between work and value, ranging from political economic approaches grounded in the labor theory of value, to questions concerning the cultural values animating specific orientations and oppositions to work. His research practice is ethnographically informed, though practical constraints mean that text and talk often replace embodied action as the objects of study. He is currently Head of the Department of Human Resources and Organizational Behaviour in the Lord Ashcroft International Business School, and is on the editorial boards of *Organization Studies* and *Organization*.

Ann Langley is Professor of management at HEC Montréal, Canada and holder of the Chair in Strategic Management in Pluralistic Settings. Her research focuses on strategic change, inter-professional collaboration, and the practice of strategy in complex organizations. She is particularly interested in process-oriented research and methodology and has published a number of papers on that topic. In 2013, she was co-guest editor with Clive Smallman, Haridimos Tsoukas, and Andrew Van de Ven of a Special Research Forum of *Academy of Management Journal* on Process Studies of Change in Organizations and Management. She is also co-editor of the journal *Strategic Organization*, and co-editor with Haridimos Tsoukas of a book series, *Perspectives on Process Organization Studies*, published with Oxford University Press. She is adjunct professor at Université de Montréal, Canada, and University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

Sharon Mavin is Professor of Leadership and Organization Studies and Director of Newcastle University Business School, Newcastle University, UK; a Fellow of the British Academy of Management; Chair of the University Forum of Human Resource Development; co-Editor of *Gender in Management: An International Journal*; and an Associate Editor of *International Journal of Management Reviews*. Her research interests are in women's leadership, female misogyny, doing gender, identity, vulnerability, dirty work, and gendered media representa-

tions. She is widely published in journals such as *Human Relations*, *British Journal of Management*, *Organization*, *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *Gender, Work & Organization*, *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, and *Gender and Management: An International Journal*.

Alexandra Michel is faculty at the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania, USA, where she also received her doctorate (Wharton School). Her ongoing ethnographic research tracks four cohorts of investment bankers for over a decade, documenting how innovations in the work practices of knowledge intensive firms (1) shape the psychology and embodiment of participants and (2) diffuse through our economy. Her research has appeared in *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Organization Science*, in various sociology, anthropology, and psychology journals, and as a book manuscript (*Bullish on Uncertainty: How Organizational Cultures Transform Participants*, Oxford Press).

Jose F. Molina-Azorin is an Associate Professor in the Department of Management at the University of Alicante, Spain. His research focuses on strategic management, specifically competitive strategy, strategic groups, determinants of firm performance, microfoundations, dynamic capabilities, and the relationships between competitive strategy, organizational design, environmental management, and quality management. His research also focuses on mixed methods. Together with using mixed methods in his strategic topics, he has also examined the application and added value of mixed methods research in strategy and other management fields through systematic methodological reviews. His research on mixed methods has been published in several book chapters and in methodological journals including *Organizational Research Methods*, the *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, the *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches*, and *Quality & Quantity*, among other outlets. He is Co-editor of the *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, and helped co-edit a special issue on mixed methods research at *Organizational Research Methods*.

Michael D. Myers is Professor of Information Systems at the University of Auckland Business School, New Zealand. His research interests are in the areas of qualitative research methods and the social, organizational, and cultural aspects of information systems. Michael wrote *Qualitative Research in Business & Management*, published by Sage Publications in 2013 (2nd edition). He has also published research articles in many journals including *European Journal of Information Systems*, *Information and Management*, *Information and Organization*, *Information Systems Journal*, *Information Systems Research*, *Information Technology & People*, *Journal of Management Information Systems*, *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, *Journal of Information Technology*, and *MIS Quarterly*. Michael won the Best Paper award (with Heinz Klein) for the most outstanding paper published in *MIS Quarterly* in 1999. He previously served as Senior Editor of *MIS Quarterly* from 2001–5 and as Senior Editor of *Information Systems Research* from 2008–10.

Joe O'Mahoney is a Professor in Organizational Studies in Cardiff Business School, UK. He has co-authored a book on critical realist research methods, and researches realist approaches to organization theory, especially in the area of management ideas and worker identities.

Rebecca Piekkari is Professor of International Business at the Aalto University, School of Business (formerly Helsinki School of Economics) in Finland. She has published on

qualitative research methods, particularly on the use of case studies in international business. Her most recent book, entitled *Rethinking the Case Study in International Business and Management Research*, was co-edited with Catherine Welch and published by Edward Elgar in May 2011. During the past few years, she has also developed a special interest in multi-lingual organizations and the methodological challenges associated with fieldwork that crosses language boundaries. Rebecca has worked as Visiting Professor at several well-known business schools and universities and taught the case studies particularly to PhD students.

Craig Pritchard's current academic practice involves various forms of critical action research into the development of alternative NZ dairy industries in Aotearoa/New Zealand. He is Associate Professor in Massey Business School's School of Management, based in the Manawatu.

Katrina Pritchard is an Associate Professor in the School of Management at Swansea University, UK. Her research interests include the construction of identity and professional knowledge, digital media and devices at work, and diversity, with a specific focus on age and gender. Katrina is interested in a broad range of methodological issues in organizational studies, including digital and visual approaches.

Alexandra Rheinhardt is a PhD student in the Smeal College of Business at Penn State University, USA. Her main research interests revolve around individual level identity and identification (including how identity is primed and the consequences of identification), organizational level identity, individual and organizational roles and role-relationships, as well as leadership. She primarily conducts qualitative and conceptual research.

Silvio Ripamonti is an Assistant Professor in Work and Organizational Psychology at the Psychology Department, Faculty of Psychology, Catholic University of Milan, Italy. His current research focuses on management learning, aging, organizational learning, and HRM in organizations.

Jenny K. Rodriguez is Lecturer in Employment Studies at the University of Manchester, UK. Her research interests span across two areas: intersectionality in work and organizations, and international human resource management. Her published work has reported on these issues in Latin America, the Hispanic Caribbean and the Middle East. Her current research explores intersectional inequality from a transnational feminist perspective, and the interplay between identity, work, and regulation, specifically looking at the experiences of transnational skilled migrants.

Linda Rouleau is Professor at the Management Department of HEC Montreal, Canada. Her research work focuses on micro-strategy and strategizing in pluralistic contexts. She is also doing research on the strategic sensemaking role of middle managers and leaders. She is co-editor of the *Cambridge Handbook of Strategy as Practice*. In the last few years, she has published in peer-reviewed journals such as *Academy of Management Review*, *Organization Science*, *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, *Journal of Management Studies*, and *Human Relations*. She is co-responsible for the G6PS (Strategy-as-Practice Study Group, HEC Montreal). She is also leading an international and interdisciplinary network on 'Organizing in Extreme Contexts'.

Mark N.K. Saunders is Professor of Business Research Methods at Birmingham Business School, University of Birmingham, UK. His research interests include research methods, organizational trust, and SMEs. Mark's research has been published in a range of journals including *British Journal of Management*, *Human Relations*, *Journal of Small Business Management*, and *Social Science and Medicine*. His books include *Research Methods for Business Students* (currently in its 7th edition), *Handbook of Research Methods on Trust* (currently in its 2nd edition), and *Handbook of Research Methods on Human Resource Development*.

Giuseppe Scaratti is Professor in Work and Organizational Psychology at the Psychology Department, Faculty of Economics, Catholic University of Milan, Italy. His current research interests are on practice-based approaches to the study of knowing, learning, and change in organizations, HRM and knowledge management in organizations, evaluation, social sustainability, and qualitative research methods in organizational research. As Director of the Psychology of Work Service (Department of Psychology) and of Trailab (Transformative Action Interdisciplinary Laboratory – Faculty of Economics) he is involved in research projects and intervention on the field with multiple organizations and stakeholders.

Bettina Schneider is currently the Associate Vice-President Academic and an Associate Professor in Business and Public Administration in the Department of Indigenous Science, Environment, and Economic Development at the First Nations University of Canada (FNUUniv). Bettina is a non-Indigenous scholar, originally from the United States. She received her MS in Community Development and her PhD in Native American Studies from the University of California, Davis, USA. Bettina has also worked as a consultant for First Nations Development Institute, First Nations Oweesta Corporation, and Opportunity Finance Network. Her research has predominantly focused on Indigenous community and economic development strategies, Native and Aboriginal financial institutions, Indigenous-relevant business and financial literacy curricula, and First Nations financial reporting and accountability relationships.

Barbara Simpson is Professor of Leadership and Organisational Dynamics at Strathclyde Business School in Glasgow, UK. Her PhD in Management, which was awarded by the University of Auckland in 1998, marked a sea change from her earlier career as a physics-trained geothermal scientist. Nevertheless, traces of this past experience remain evident in her work today, which brings the principles of action, flow, and movement to bear on the processes of creativity, innovation, leadership, and change. She has pursued these interests in diverse organizational settings including hi-tech businesses, professional firms, public utilities, arts companies, SMEs, and micro-enterprises involved in the manufacture of plastics and food products. Her current research is deeply informed by the philosophies of the American Pragmatists, especially George Herbert Mead's thinking on process and temporality. She has published her work in journals including *Organization Studies*, *Human Relations*, *Organization*, *R&D Management*, and the *Journal of Management Inquiry*.

Amanda Sinclair is an author, researcher, teacher, and consultant in leadership, change, gender, and diversity. She is a Professorial Fellow at Melbourne Business School, The University of Melbourne. Her books include: *Doing Leadership Differently* (1998); *Leadership for the Disillusioned* (2007); *Leading Mindfully* (2016); and *Women Leading* (with Christine Nixon, 2017). Amanda has been at the forefront of leadership research in gender, sexualities,

bodies, and identities. As a yoga and meditation teacher she believes that bodies and minds – together – nourish rich and generative practices of researching, thinking, leading, and living. She is a passionate advocate for, and experimenter in, academic writing, and longs for academic writing which is as surprising and pleasurable as a good novel. Her partner, four adult children, and other animals help remind her of these and other important things.

Ning Su is Associate Professor of General Management, Strategy and Information Systems at the Ivey Business School, Western University, Canada. His research examines global innovation and outsourcing strategies, with a focus on field-based case studies and qualitative research methods. His work is published in journals such as the *Management Information Systems Quarterly* (MISQ), *MIT Sloan Management Review*, and *Decision Sciences*. Professor Su is the recipient of the inaugural Early Career Award of the Association for Information Systems, the 40 Most Outstanding MBA Professors Under 40 of Poets&Quants, the Giarratani Rising Star Award runner-up of the Industry Studies Association, and Best Article Awards from the Decision Sciences Institute and IBM Research.

Scott Taylor is Reader in Leadership & Organization Studies at Birmingham Business School, University of Birmingham, UK. His research focuses on the meaning of work and workplaces in people's lives. Scott approaches this through interpretive analysis of qualitative data, using interview, documents, and participant observation to gather empirical material. He has worked with a range of sociological analytical perspectives, such as semiotics, Weberian analysis, autonomous Marxism, and contemporary feminist theory. Scott is currently director of undergraduate programs at Birmingham Business School, Associate Editor of *Organization*, and has served as the US Academy of Management Critical Management Studies division chair.

Leah Tomkins is a Senior Lecturer in Organization Studies at The Open University, UK. Her research focuses on the experiences of work and organization, including the ways in which these are both enabled and constrained by discursive, historical context. She draws on the philosophies of hermeneutics and phenomenology to try to make sense of organizations and the people who inhabit and lead them, critiquing popular notions of 'authentic leadership' and 'the caring organization' for downplaying the lived experiences of work in its day-to-day, un-heroic moments. Her work has appeared in a range of leading journals, including *Organization Studies*, *Organization*, *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, *Management Learning*, *Business Ethics Quarterly*, and *The Humanistic Psychologist*.

Keith Townsend is Associate Professor at Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia. His research interests focus primarily on line managers (particularly frontline managers) and employee voice, but has a keen interest in understanding approaches to qualitative research methods. His research has been published in a range of journals including *Human Resource Management Journal*, *Work, Employment and Society*, and *Human Resource Management* (US). He has also published research methods books titled *Method in the Madness: Research Stories You Won't Read in Text-Books* and *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in HRM: Innovative Techniques*.

Steve Vincent is Chair in Work and Organization at Newcastle University Business School, UK. He has co-authored a book on critical realist research methods, and uses critical realism

to inform his research, which touches on skills and soft-skills at work, self-employed workers, work organization, and the labor process.

Catherine Welch is Associate Professor of International Business at the University of Sydney, Australia. She has a long-standing interest in qualitative research methods, and at the moment her research lies in applying process approaches to the study of firm internationalization. Together with Rebecca Piekkari, she has edited two volumes on qualitative research published by Edward Elgar: *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods for International Business* (2004) and *Rethinking the Case Study in International Business and Management Research* (2011). She has published on numerous aspects of doing qualitative research, including interviewing, writing-up, and the case study. She, Rebecca Piekkari, and their co-authors have published their work on the case study in *Organizational Research Methods*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *International Journal of Management Reviews*, and *Industrial Marketing Management*.

Alia Weston is an Assistant Professor at OCAD University, Toronto. She has expertise in the areas of business management and design, and her research is focused on understanding how creativity and business can contribute to positive social change. Key themes in her research include exploring creative resistance within resource constrained environments, and exploring how alternative business practices can contribute to solving challenges in society. Alia has contributed to research about alternative and postcolonial work practices in Africa and Latin America, and her work has been published in a diverse range of media. This includes scholarly work in *Organization* journal, edited collections on *Critical Perspectives on Entrepreneurship*, and *Precarious Spaces: The Arts, Social & Organizational Change*, as well as the *Globe and Mail*, a leading Canadian newspaper. In conjunction with her research, she hosts workshops and exhibitions which engage with issues related to creative and sustainable work practices. A notable example is the *(Re)² Reconstructing Resilience* conference and art exhibition.

Rebecca Whiting is a lecturer in the Department of Organizational Psychology at Birkbeck, University of London, UK. Her research interests include aspects of the contemporary workplace such as the discursive construction of work identities (for example, the older worker), concepts (such as age, gender, and work-life, boundaries), and digital technologies at work. She is also interested in the particular challenges of qualitative digital research and visual methodologies.

Andrea Whittle is a Professor of Management at Newcastle University Business School, UK. Her research is driven by a fascination with how people interact and use language in organizational settings to construct their reality. Her research is informed by ethnomethodology, discourse analysis, and conversation analysis, and she has written about a variety of organizational settings, including organizational change, strategy, management consulting, and public inquiries.

Suze Wilson's research involves the critical analysis of leadership and particularly why and how it has become normalized for us to equate 'leadership' with grandiose expectations of 'transformation', 'vision', and 'charisma'. She is interested in theorizing and practicing leadership in ways that are more inclusive and humble. Suze is senior lecturer in the School of Management at Massey Business School based in the Manawatu, New Zealand.

Introduction: Qualitative Research in Business and Management

Catherine Cassell, Ann L. Cunliffe and Gina Grandy

Welcome to *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods*. The *Handbook* aims to provide a state-of-the-art overview of qualitative research methods in the business and management field. Our intention is to provide a comprehensive review of the history and traditions that underpin qualitative research within management and organisations; outline a number of contemporary methods and their relevance; and explore some of the challenges that may lie ahead for qualitative researchers. In doing so, we draw from a wide range of research traditions. While any handbook seeks to be comprehensive, it will inevitably offer a view of the field informed by a particular lens. In this case, that lens is the view of the three editors, all experienced qualitative scholars, and also the viewpoint of our contributors, who are all leading-edge, international qualitative researchers. A number of chapters are targeted at those who are relatively new to the field, while others are aimed at experienced

qualitative researchers. Some chapters cover methods that are well established, whereas others highlight new and unfolding methods or areas of investigation. We encourage you to dip in and out of the *Handbook*, following up on any traditions, methods or issues that particularly capture your interest.

Our philosophy in putting together the *Handbook* is that we have sought to recognise and celebrate the diversity of qualitative business and management research methods. The three editors all come from different traditions and we may make quite different methodological and philosophical choices in relation to our own qualitative research practices. However, we are committed to encouraging rather than problematising such diversity and believe it is important, especially for new researchers, to be aware of the range of philosophical positions, epistemologies, methodologies and methods available. As John Van Maanen noted back in 1995, 'From examples of novel practices can come individual and collective experiments and

perhaps as a result we can loosen up some of the writer's cramps that seem so prevalent in our field' (1995, p. 139). Loosening researcher's cramps by supporting diversity maintains the richness of our field and legitimates different ways of theorising, writing and enacting researcher roles. The authors in the *Handbook* are therefore researching management and/or organisations from within different disciplines (including strategy, organisational psychology, organisational communications, sociology, international business and education) using a wide range of traditions and methods. Inevitably, while acknowledging that the *Handbook* is wide in coverage, we also recognise that we will never be able to fully capture a developing and ever-changing domain.

This introductory chapter positions what follows in the *Handbook* by outlining some of the characteristics of the current state of qualitative business and management research methods and highlighting some of the debates and challenges in the field. We also introduce the different sections of the *Handbook* to offer the reader an overview of what follows. The chapters have been arranged across two thematic volumes; the first focussing on 'History and Traditions', and the second covering 'Methods and Challenges'. For ease of navigation, in this chapter we have included notes in parentheses wherever specific chapters or sections are mentioned, to indicate which companion volume ('History' or 'Methods') the chapter appears in. We invite you to join with us on this journey through what is a thriving and exciting methodological domain.

CHARACTERISING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN THE BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT FIELD

Given the diversity outlined above, how can we characterise qualitative business, management and organisational research? The

first comment we would make is that there is increasing interest in the uses and opportunities offered by research informed by qualitative methods. Qualitative research can now be found in many different areas within the 'discipline' of business, management and organisational research, including those traditionally seen as founded upon objectivity, 'facts', numbers and quantification. For example, we now see qualitative research in accounting (Boll, 2014; Lee & Humphrey, 2006); entrepreneurship (Díaz García & Welter, 2011); finance (Kaczynski, et al., 2014; Salmona, et al., 2015); human resource management (Townsend et al., 2016); international business (Doz, 2011; Moore, 2012); information systems (Hoeftnagel et al., 2014); marketing (Bellenger et al., 2011; Rokka & Canniford, 2016); organisational behaviour (Cassell & Symon, 2004; O'Leary & Sandberg, 2016; Symon & Cassell, 2012); organisational communication (Brummans, 2014; Tracy et al., 2014); organisational psychology (Crozier & Cassell, 2016; Neergaard & Uhløi, 2008; Symon & Cassell, 2006) and strategy (Anteby et al., 2014; Bettis et al., 2014). Hence qualitative research now takes place and is also published in most, if not all, of the sub-disciplines of business and management. There has also been a number of new journals focussing upon qualitative methods and issues, for example the *Journal of Organizational Ethnography* established in 2012; *Qualitative Research in Financial Markets* established in 2009; and *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management; an International Journal* established in 2006. Furthermore, there have been a number of special issues of management journals focussing upon work informed by qualitative research methods. Sometimes these special issues bring together a range of different qualitative methods to support the development of a particular research topic, for example exploring and understanding dirty work (Grandy et al., 2014) or international marketing (Andriopoulos & Slater, 2013). Other special issues focus upon the uses of a

particular type of method across a range of topics, for example case studies (Lee et al., 2007); shadowing (McDonald & Simpson, 2014); stories (Donnelly et al., 2013) or video (Jarzabkowski et al., 2014). Additionally, others are connected to qualitative research conferences, for example, QRM Conference 2012 ‘Embodiment, Imagination and Meaning’, in *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*.

Within sub-areas of the discipline it is evident that qualitative research has developed at different rates and with different foci. However, many of the common debates around methods such as philosophical approaches, quality criteria, different tools of analysis and the role of software in data analysis have been critiqued within these different areas. For example, there have been debates about quality criteria within qualitative management research more generally (see Amis & Silk, 2008; Bluhm et al., 2011; Symon et al., 2016), as well as how it relates to specific research designs and subject areas (see Gibbert et al., 2008 on case study research; Healy & Perry, 2000 on market research; and Welch et al., 2013 on international business).

There has also been differential progress towards the use and acceptance of qualitative research in various geographical communities of qualitative researchers. The use of qualitative management research in North America, Europe and the rest of the world has developed at different rates and has been informed by different traditions (Lee & Humphrey, 2006). Üsdiken (2014) notes that there is less qualitative research published in US journals than their European alternatives. Bengtsson et al. (1997) suggest that the transatlantic gap can also be explained by different methodological approaches in that European research is more frequently idiographic and processual, whereas, in contrast, US research is dominated by nomothetic approaches with their emphasis upon quantitative analysis across large samples to test hypotheses. This is still relevant today, and perhaps partially explained by cultural differences in

postgraduate research training. In the UK, Europe and Australasia it is not unusual to see such training focus around learning the craft of research, with courses on research philosophy, and qualitative and quantitative research methods to advanced levels. In the US, postgraduate training is usually discipline-based (e.g. accounting, organisational behaviour, marketing), focussing on extending disciplinary knowledge. Research philosophy is rarely covered and the positivist assumptions underpinning much of the coursework remain unchallenged. This has had not just a methodological impact but also a philosophical one. For example, critical, practice-based and discursive approaches to research are more common to European, Australasian, and Latin American business and management researchers – and US-based organisational communications researchers – because of their philosophical training. Other parts of the world also have different epistemological traditions, some of which may not be as open to qualitative research. For example, Chen (2016) discusses the challenges of teaching qualitative research in China, where, he argues, there is a lack of support for qualitative research because it is seen as subjective, biased and unrepresentative. In addressing such concerns, Chen (2016, p. 72) outlines the importance of an experiential learning strategy that draws upon a pedagogy familiar within Chinese management learning of the ‘unity of knowing and doing’.

We recognise there is a potential danger in characterising traditions as US or European. We do acknowledge that there is diversity within continents and regional locations and that some caution is required. For example, Knoblauch et al. (2002, p. 2), in discussing the variety of qualitative research in Europe, highlight how scientific enterprises such as qualitative research are imprinted by cultures – not only by ‘epistemic cultures’, but also by their surrounding institutions, traditions and political, as well as economic contexts. They suggest that in the European context, the impact of specific national traditions of

thinking upon qualitative research can particularly be seen in countries that have passed through a Communist era, such as Poland and Slovenia.

Having noted the diversity in histories and development, we would also characterise qualitative research in this field as one where there is currently considerable methodological innovation. Indeed, as Buchanan & Bryman (2007) highlight, recent methodological innovation within the field of management and organisational research more generally has been located around qualitative and interpretive methods. Three trends are particularly worthy of mention here: first, the opportunities offered by increasingly sophisticated communication technologies; second, advances in the use of visual methods; and third, innovations in how researchers 'do' and write up qualitative research. Taking new technologies first, the development of the internet and new forms of social media have opened up a variety of online contexts available for the qualitative researcher to study (Zicker & Carter, 2010). The recent emergence of virtual ethnography, where participant observation can occur in a variety of locations such as online chat rooms, offers new opportunities for accessing the culture of online communities. Other terms used in this area include netnography and webnography. The former is a term coined by Kozinets (2010) and the latter by Purli (2007), both intended to refer to particular types of online ethnography. Other qualitative researchers have looked at the opportunities for using standard qualitative methods online, for example interviewing (Morgan & Symon, 2004; Salmons, 2015) and online focus groups (Stewart & Williams, 2005). Within the *Handbook*, we deal with some of these new methods of collecting research data in chapters such as *netnography* by Kozinets and *analysing web images* by Pritchard and Whiting. We also consider some of the distinctive challenges that such methods pose, for example in Whiting and Pritchard's chapter on *digital ethics*.

Turning now to developments in visual methods, although previously under-explored in organisation and management research (Davison et al., 2012; Meyer et al., 2013), Bell & Davison (2013) suggest that this is changing. Whereas in the past the emphasis upon the linguistic turn had led to visuality typically being neglected, this is now being re-addressed in organisation and management studies. An indication of this visual turn is the increased resources available for qualitative management and organisational researchers interested in such methods (e.g. Invisio <http://in-visio.org/>) and the special issues on visual methods that have been produced by different journals (e.g. *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal*, 2009; *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 2012; *Organizational Research Methods*, 2016). Hence it is not surprising that this *Handbook* contains a number of chapters and, indeed, a special section on visual methods. As Davison et al. (2012) suggest, visual methods particularly lean towards qualitative analysis, and within this collection we have chapters on *photographs* (Warren); *drawing* (Ward and Shortt); and *collages* (Plakoyiannaki and Stavradi). The use of video is also highlighted in the chapters on *multimodality* (Viney, Clarke and Cornelissen); and *ethnographic documentaries* (Morgan, Game & Slutskaya). A key issue in all these developments is the possibility of both established and emerging approaches and methods to offer new research insights (Gill, 2014; Jarret & Liu, 2016; Ray & Smith, 2012).

The turn to visual methods has clearly also opened up novel ways to 'do' and present or write up qualitative research. We have also seen attention directed to other innovative ways to do and present qualitative research. Qualitative researchers have brought to light the significance of smell to workplace and research experiences (Baxter & Ritchie, 2013; Riach & Warren, 2015), the body as a critical aspect informing the researcher's experiences (Mavin & Grandy, 2016a,

2016b), as well as that which informs the everyday experiences of leadership (Ladkin, 2014; Sinclair, 2005, 2011, 2014), and the role of emotion in research (Rivera & Tracy, 2014). Rivera & Tracy's (2014) qualitative research on the experiences of border patrol officers is a particularly poignant piece which draws from vignettes, participant observation, shadowing and interviews to sharply bring to light how emotion does inform our experiences of work and research. Their piece vividly surfaces what it *feels* like to do such 'dirty work', something we suggest can only emerge through an innovative approach to doing and writing-up qualitative research. Overall, rare and rich insights are afforded through reflexive, embodied, emotive and aesthetically driven qualitative research.

In a related vein, yet at the same time in ways moving us away from methods more generally, an increased interest in qualitative management research draws attention to the role of the individual researcher. Within the methodological literature this has been evidenced by the increased focus upon researcher positioning and reflexive research practice (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013; Hibbert et al., 2014). There is a burgeoning literature within organisation studies about the role and contribution of researcher reflexivity (e.g. Cunliffe, 2003; Johnson & Duberley, 2003; Weick, 2002). Given the closeness of the researcher to the research participants within qualitative research, this is particularly pertinent for qualitative researchers. For Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2009, p. 9), reflexivity 'means that serious attention is paid to the way different kinds of linguistic, social, political and theoretical elements are woven together in the process of knowledge development, during which empirical material is constructed, interpreted and written'. The benefits of researcher reflexivity are seen to be numerous, ranging from enabling us to think about our own thinking (Haynes, 2012) and our own bodies (Mavin & Grandy, 2016a, 2016b; Sinclair, 2014); questioning the taken-for-granted in our own and others beliefs (Ripamonti et al.,

2016); emphasising the inclusion of the researcher (Hardy et al., 2001); and creating 'more imaginative, more nuanced and richer interpretations' (Cunliffe, 2011, p. 409) from our data. Reflexive thinking also enables the opening up of new possibilities with different types of research questions (Sandberg & Alvesson, 2010), new ways of theoretical thinking (Shotter, 2008) and new ways of engaging with participants and the outcomes of such engagements (Corlett, 2013; Holton & Grandy, 2016). Moreover, within qualitative organisational research, reflexivity is moving towards being seen as standard practice. Indeed, authors have suggested it should be a regular part of research methods training (e.g. Symon & Cassell, 2004). Considerations of reflexivity within the literature have expanded beyond the purely methodological; as Weick (2002, p. 893) suggests, theory construction in the current millennium can be seen as an exercise in 'disciplined reflexivity'.

In summary, we would portray the field of qualitative business and management research methods as characterised by diversity in epistemologies and methods, with novel methodologies and approaches being developed all the time. We have suggested that there is now a more nuanced approach to the role of the researcher and to reflexivity, and more generally an exciting future ahead. Within the *Handbook* we have captured some of that diversity and the chapters offer thought-provoking explorations to those interested in using these methods.

KEY CHALLENGES

Any academic domain faces challenges and critique, and here we outline some of the challenges currently experienced by qualitative management researchers. The increased prevalence of qualitative research has resulted in the emergence of a number of debates including the status and quality of qualitative business and management research. Recent

commentaries have focussed upon the extent to which qualitative research has made it into the mainstream (e.g. Bluhm et al., 2011; Üsdickén, 2014) and the increased acceptance (or not) of qualitative research within top journals in the field. Some argue that considerable progress has been made. However, this advancement is not universally recognised by qualitative researchers. While Üsdickén's (2014) review of 40 years of management publications argues that there is an increase in the amount of qualitative research published in those journals, we suggest that an increase of 14.3 per cent over a 30 year period is hardly a radical change.

These debates inevitably link in to discussions of quality in qualitative research and how quality is defined (e.g. Symon et al., 2016; Tracy, 2010; Welch et al., 2013). This has long been a problem within the evaluation of qualitative management research in that criteria associated with a positivist paradigm informed by quantitative approaches have been inappropriately applied to qualitative research (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Johnson et al., 2006). This has led to various authors creating alternative sets of criteria for qualitative research and some arguing that without the expansion of such evaluation criteria, some of the work produced by qualitative management researchers may be undermined (Amis & Silk, 2008). Organisation studies scholars argue that the criteria for evaluating qualitative management research need to be contingent upon the philosophical tradition within which such research is conducted (Cunliffe, 2011; Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993; Johnson et al. 2006), the implication being that the different traditions outlined in the first section of the *Handbook* would draw upon different evaluation criteria. To supplement this, Tracy (2010) identifies eight flexible 'big tent' criteria – a worthy topic, rich rigour, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics and meaningful coherence – markers of goodness for qualitative research. She argues that while criteria are contextual

and not value free, they provide important heuristics that reflect the core values of a particular craft. The use of criteria appropriate to the philosophical and methodological positioning of the research would lead to a more level playing field for qualitative business and management research.

Such criteriological debates link into concerns about the move towards increasing standardisation within qualitative management research (Cassell, 2016). In outlining sources of standardisation, Cassell cites the recommendations made by different journal editors about what qualitative researchers need to do in order to get their papers published in the top international outlets. Such prescriptive types of editorials and articles are critiqued extensively by Symon et al. (2016, p. 1), who argue that they serve to produce '(inappropriate) homogeneous evaluation criteria' with the consequence of 'marginalising alternative perspectives and disciplining individual qualitative researchers into particular normative practices'. A concern with a move to formulaic treatment of research questions has been critiqued more generally elsewhere within our field (e.g. Alvesson & Gabriel, 2013), but Cornelissen (2016) notes that there is also a move towards what he describes as factor analytic approaches to qualitative research, where data analysis strategies mimic the principles of quantitative analysis. Our concern is that this potentially serves to limit creativity within qualitative research – a state, as Van Mannen (1995, p. 139) provocatively observed, of 'technocratic unimaginativeness' where 'our generalizations often display a mind-numbing banality and an inexplicable readiness to reduce the field to a set of unexamined, turgid, hypothetical thrusts designed to render organizations systematic and organization theory safe for science'. As noted earlier, we see diversity as something to celebrate, rather than to be constrained.

We would also be remiss not to acknowledge the challenges that qualitative researchers can confront in trying to balance the need to stay within what can be restrictive page

limits with the inclusion of enough ‘raw’ data to present a persuasive account for their reviewers. Pratt (2009) suggests that qualitative researchers include both ‘power’ and ‘proof’ quotes as a means to persuade the reviewers of the rigour of the findings. This, however, can often be challenging within page limits historically designed for research that employs quantitative methods.

Institutional requirements can also create a challenge. Pressure to publish a defined number of articles in top (often mainstream) journals within a specified time frame has an impact on a researcher’s ability to engage in more longitudinal and ethnographic studies – good qualitative research takes time! Negotiating institutional review boards and ethics committees when doing snowball sampling (confidentiality issues), ethnography (does everyone that the researcher encounters need to sign a consent form?), and getting consent when doing participatory action research (see Burns et al., 2014) requires persistence, but is often rewarded by rich, in-depth insights into organisational life.

Such debates are characteristic of lively methodological engagement. We would argue that the production of a *Handbook* to highlight, critique and review the contribution of qualitative research to our field is somewhat timely. Clearly, considerable progress has been made in this area, but there is also room for so much more. We would hope that the *Handbook*, through its coverage of these different debates within a methodological context, enables us to progress these debates in a constructive way and draw attention to the many opportunities that qualitative research methods offer to our diverse research field.

INTRODUCING THE *HANDBOOK*

Putting together the content of the *Handbook* felt like an important responsibility in that it could be interpreted as the editorial team defining the content of the field, though, as

noted earlier, as shaped by our own perspective and position within it. Feedback from the reviewers of the collection and our international advisory board helped to develop the content. In the end, we found out that the challenges in putting the *Handbook* together very much mirrored the challenges facing the discipline and practice of qualitative management research. We wanted the content to reflect the diversity of the methodological field, including epistemologies, methods and research designs. Hence the reader will find chapters from a wide array of philosophical stances to qualitative management research ranging from *positivist qualitative research* (Su), *interpretative science* (Gephart) and *constructionism* (Grandy), to analytic techniques informed by post-structuralism such as *discourse* (Fairhurst and Cooren) and *sociomateriality* (Riach), to those informed by post-positivism, for example *fuzzy set qualitative content analysis* (Sinkovics et al.). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the challenges outlined in the previous sections are all addressed within different contributions of the *Handbook*, so we have chapters on publishing qualitative research aimed at beginners to the field, *writing for different audiences* (Myers), together with the more challenging questions and debates about *conducting and publishing rigorous qualitative research* (Rheinhardt et al.).

The book starts by addressing some of the wide variety of traditions within which qualitative research is conducted. The aim here is to provide an overview of those different traditions and we cover long-established philosophical approaches such as *positivism* (Su); *interpretivism* (Gephart); *pragmatism* (Simpson); *hermeneutics* (Tomkins & Eatough); *critical realism* (Vincent & Mahoney) and *ethnomethodology* (Whittle); alongside more recent approaches such as *critical management studies* (Pritchard et al.); *poststructuralism* (Benozzo); *mixed methods* (Molina-Azurin); *feminism* (Harding); *constructionism* (Grandy); *postcolonialism* (Weston & Imas) and *indigenous methodologies* (Schneider & Kayseas). Each of those

chapters provides an overview of the philosophical approach, together with summaries of key debates and the implications for qualitative business and management research.

The next section of the book focusses upon research designs within qualitative business and management research. Again, our aim here was to represent the key approaches used within the field with a particular focus on what perhaps can be seen as traditional research design approaches within qualitative research. We start with chapters on *field research* (Michel) and *workplace ethnographies* (Ciuk et al.), which help characterise some of the first forays into qualitative research by management researchers. Holton's chapter on *grounded theorizing* provides needed clarity to the debate on grounded theory as a design in qualitative research. She distinguishes between grounded theory as a general methodology in its own right and the inductive approach typically employed by qualitative researchers often referred to as grounded theory. She advocates for the use of grounded theorising, not grounded theory, to depict that which is employed by qualitative researchers. There are also chapters on *action research* (Scaratti et al.) and *case studies* (Piekkari & Welch), both of which have long traditions in qualitative management research. Chapters on *process* (Fachin & Langley) and *practice designs* (Abdallah et al.) conclude this section.

As noted earlier, there is an increased emphasis within qualitative business and management research about the role of the researcher in the research process. Within lies a recognition that we are part of the organisational world that we study and therefore this will impact the methods, process and outcomes of our research in a variety of different ways. Section Three includes a number of chapters that focus explicitly on the researcher's role. Within this section considerable attention is paid to reflexivity and the implications in practice of taking a reflexive stance. The key issues and challenges are outlined in reflexivity and positionality (Corlett & Mavin) and

the problematic issue of how the researcher achieves some critical distance, if indeed this is possible, is critiqued (Hayward & Cassell). Fahad et al. provide an informative insider account of the reflexive challenges faced by men interviewing women, while Sinclair & Ladkin provide an interesting account of the possibilities that come for the researcher when they acknowledge and embrace writing from the body as a qualitative researcher. Rodriguez's chapter on *intersectionality and qualitative research* brings to light how gender and other 'markers' of difference are recreated and sustained within systems of power and inequality and how qualitative research opportunities and challenges arise through this methodological framework. Both Sinclair & Ladkin and Rodriguez offer insights into the researched and the researcher. Our editorial aim in this section is to problematise the role of the qualitative researcher and explore a range of different dimensions of the lived experience of qualitative research.

Volume one concludes with a section on some of the challenges associated with conducting qualitative research. Taylor & Land discuss the key issue of *access and departure*, something that faces every qualitative researcher and is increasingly discussed within the qualitative literature. Publication is an often-cited challenge for the qualitative management researcher and here we have two different insightful approaches to the topic. Whereas Myers offers *writing for different audiences* as a resource for the novice qualitative researcher, Reinhardt et al. offer suggestions for how we understand conducting and *publishing rigorous qualitative research*, recognising that rigour may be defined in a variety of ways by different qualitative researchers. The increasing globalisation of management research offers both opportunities and challenges and these are addressed by Gobo in his chapter about globalisation and *qualitative research across boundaries*. The distinctive challenges of ethics in international research are also explored by Bell & Kothiyal. The increased impact of

globalisation and the use of novel communication technologies offers a series of new ethical challenges, as critiqued by Whiting & Pritchard in their chapter on *digital ethics*. The chapter in this section by Saunders & Townsend offers discussion on an issue of key importance for qualitative researchers: *choosing research participants*.

Volume two of the *Handbook* turns to consider methods more specifically. Given the extensive variety in methods as noted earlier, the volume outlines both the traditional approaches with a long history, such as interviews (Lee & Aslam), and those that are relatively new. Where well-used approaches are discussed, the intention is to provide the reader a new angle or perspective on those methods, for example Lee & Aslam discuss the nature of the *wholesome interview* and Learmonth & Griffin offer us a new way of understanding images of women at work through *analysing fiction* in Disney films. Section 5, on contemporary methods, includes methods of data collection and analysis, although in some chapters the method encapsulates both, as can be seen in the chapters on *autoethnography* (Haynes) and *stories and narrative* (Gabriel). Novel methods often underemployed by qualitative researchers in business and management are also covered, for example *diary studies* (Radcliffe), *shadowing* (McDonald) and *archival analysis* (Mills and Helms Mills). Contemporary theoretical approaches such as *sociomateriality* (Davies & Riach) and *dramaturgical methods* (Birch) are showcased alongside methods that have had a long history within the field, for example *group methods* (Coule). Other chapters in this section focus upon alternative ways of analysing language, for example *rhetoric* (Hamilton), *discourse* (Fairhurst & Cooren) and *stories and narrative* (Gabriel). The section concludes with a new look at one of the longstanding ways of analysing qualitative data, *thematic analysis* (King & Brooks).

As noted earlier, there has been an increased usage within business, organisation and management fields of visual methods. In recognising

these developments, we decided to devote a full section within the *Handbook* to these approaches, though we recognise that the visual is also considered in other places within the *Handbook*. The chapters in Section 6 illustrate the potential of different visual methods such as *photographs* (Warren), *drawing* (Ward & Shortt) and *collages* (Plakoyiannaki & Stavrakaki). The possibilities for videos in qualitative research are also on the rise. In a particularly unique approach, Morgan et al. discuss how research participants can create their own videos through *ethnographic documentaries*. Analysis of visual images is more directly addressed in Viney et al.'s chapter on *semiotics and symbols* and Pritchard and Whiting's chapter on *analysing web images*. Our prediction is that as time progresses there will be even more methodological developments within the area of visual methods of qualitative research.

The final section of the *Handbook* covers methodological developments. This section focusses upon contemporary methods that have had little airing in the qualitative business and management field. For example, Rippin & Hyde produce an intriguing account of the use of *sewing* as a critical research method technique, whereas Beech & Broad introduce us to the concept of *ethnomusicality* and what that means for research methods. Adopting an innovative approach in presenting methodological developments, Rivera threads insights from Yoda (*Star Wars*) throughout her thorough account of the important topic of *emotion and qualitative research*, while Durepos & Mills outline *ANTI-history* as an alternative approach to historiography. Using the internet for research into ethnographic communities is the focus of Kozinets' chapter on *netnography*. Alvesson & Sandberg critique the metaphors traditionally used for research design and through the use of different metaphors offer some alternative conceptualisations of the research process. This section also highlights some of the developments at the more quantitative end of qualitative data analysis such as *pattern-matching* (Sinkovics, N.) and *fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis* (Ott et al.).

CONCLUSIONS

In putting together this *Handbook* we have sought to capture the essence of what is an ever-evolving, exciting and diverse field for business and management research. The chapters weave in and out of philosophical, conceptual and empirical considerations relevant for those already engaged in qualitative research, but also relevant for those new to qualitative research and those simply curious about the possibilities afforded through qualitative research in business and management. The chapters also incorporate extensive reference lists, which can serve as a resource for those who want to delve deeper into a particular topic or study. Not only does the content reflect considerable breadth and depth in topics as it relates to qualitative research, the contributors provide perspectives from across the world, spanning such countries as Italy, Canada, the United States, the UK, India, Brazil, Greece and New Zealand, amongst others.

Putting together this *Handbook* has been a valuable learning experience for us as well. We continue to be intrigued by the different and complementary approaches that emerge across the chapters and sections of the *Handbook* and excited by the prospects they offer in terms of our own development as researchers and the insights they offer for organisation scholars and practitioners. We sincerely hope that this collection serves as a valuable resource and stimulates new paths for qualitative researchers in business and management to explore. We encourage you to read on to see what might inspire you for your next study.

REFERENCES

- Alvesson, M. & Gabriel, Y. 2013. Beyond formulaic research: In praise of greater diversity in organizational research and publications. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 12(2): 245–63.
- Amis, J.M. & Silk, M.L. 2008. The philosophy and politics of quality in qualitative organizational research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 11(3): 456–80.
- Andriopoulos, C. & Slater, S. 2013. Exploring the landscape of qualitative research in international marketing: Two decades of *IMR*. *International Marketing Review*, 30(4): 384–412.
- Anteby, M., Lifshitz, H. & Tushman, M. 2014. *Using qualitative research for "how" questions*. Retrieved from <http://strategicmanagement.net/pdfs/qualitative-research-in-strategic-management.pdf> (accessed on 16 August, 2017).
- Baxter, L.F. & Ritchie, J.M. 2013. The sense of smell in researching a bakery. *International Journal of Work Organisation and Emotion*, 5(4): 369–83.
- Bell, E. & Davison, J. 2013. Visual management studies: Empirical and theoretical approaches. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15(2): 167–84.
- Bellenger, K.L., Bernhardt, J.L. & Goldstucker, D.N. 2011. *Qualitative research in marketing*. Chicago: American Marketing Association.
- Bengtsson, L., Elg, U. & Lind, J. 1997. Bridging the transatlantic publishing gap: How North American reviewers evaluate European idiographic research. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 13(4): 473–92.
- Bettis, R.A., Gambardella, A., Helfat, C. & Mitchell, W. 2014. Theory in strategic management. *Strategic Management Journal*, 35(10): 1411–13.
- Bluhm, D.J., Harman, W., Lee, T.W. & Mitchell, T.R. 2011. Qualitative research in management: A decade of progress. *Journal of Management Studies*, 48(8): 1866–91.
- Boll, K. 2014. Shady car dealings and taxing work practices: An ethnography of a tax audit process. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 39(1): 1–19.
- Brummans, B. 2014. Pathways to mindful qualitative organizational communication research. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 28(3): 440–47.

- Buchanan, D. A. & Bryman, A. 2007. Contextualising methods choice in organizational research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 10(3): 483–501.
- Burns, D., Hyde, P., Killeth, A., Poland, F. & Gray, R. 2014. Participatory organizational research: Examining voice in the co-production of knowledge. *British Journal of Management*, 25(1): 133–44.
- Cassell, C.M. 2016. European qualitative research: A celebration of diversity and a cautionary tale. *European Management Journal*, 34(5): 453–56.
- Cassell, C.M. & Symon, G. 2004. *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research*. London: Sage.
- Chen, Z. 2016. Challenges and strategies of teaching qualitative research in China. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 22(2): 72–86.
- Corlett S. 2013. Participant learning in and through research as reflexive dialogue: Being 'struck' and the effects of recall. *Management Learning*, 44(5): 453–69.
- Cornelissen, J.P. 2016. Preserving theoretical divergence in management research: Why the explanatory potential of qualitative research should be harnessed rather than suppressed. *Journal of Management Studies*, 54(3): 368–83.
- Crozier, S. & Cassell, C.M. 2016. Methodological considerations in the use of audio diaries in work psychology: Adding to the qualitative toolkit. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 89(2): 396–419.
- Cunliffe, A.L. 2003. Reflexive inquiry in organization research: Questions and possibilities. *Human Relations*, 56(8): 983–1003.
- Cunliffe, A.L. 2011. Crafting qualitative research: Morgan and Smircich 30 years on. *Organizational Research Methods*, 14(4): 647–73.
- Cunliffe, A.L. & Karunanayake, G. 2013. Working within hyphen-spaces in ethnographic research: Implications for research identities and practice. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(3): 364–92.
- Davison, J., Mclean, C. & Warren, S. 2012. Exploring the visual in organizations and management. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 7(1): 5–15.
- Díaz Garcia, M.C. & Welter, F. 2011. Gender identities and practices: Interpreting women entrepreneurs' narratives. *International Small Business Journal*, 31(4): 384–404.
- Donnelly, P.F., Gabriel, Y. & Özkazanç-Pan, B. 2013. Untold stories of the field and beyond: Narrating the chaos. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 8(1): 4–15.
- Doz, Y. 2011. Qualitative research for international business. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 42(5): 582–90.
- Easterby-Smith, M., Golden-Biddle, K. & Locke, K. 2008. Working with pluralism: Determining quality in qualitative research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 11(3): 419–29.
- Gibbert, M., Ruigrok, W. & Wicki, B. 2008. What passes for a rigorous case study? *Strategic Management Journal*, 29(13): 1469–74.
- Gill, M.J. 2014. The possibilities of phenomenology for organizational research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 17(2): 118–37.
- Golden-Biddle, K. & Locke, K. 1993. Appealing work: An investigation of how ethnographic texts convince. *Organization Science*, 4(4): 595–617.
- Grandy, G., Mavin, S. & Simpson, R. 2014. Doing dirty research using qualitative methodologies: Lessons from stigmatized occupations. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 9(3): 174–82.
- Hardy, C., Phillips, N. & Clegg, S. 2001. Reflexivity in organization and management theory: A study of the production of the research 'subject'. *Human Relations*, 54(5): 531–60.
- Haynes, K. (2012) Reflexivity. In C.M. Cassell & G. Symon, *Qualitative methods in organizational research: Core methods and current challenges*. London: Sage.
- Healy, M. & Perry, C. 2000. Comprehensive criteria to judge validity and reliability of qualitative research within the realism paradigm. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 3(3): 118–26.
- Hibbert, P., Sillince, J., Diefenbach, T. & Cunliffe, A.L. 2014. Relationally reflexive practice: A generative approach to theory development in qualitative research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 17(3): 278–98.

- Hoefnagel, R., Oerlemans, L. & Goedee, J. 2014. How anchoring and adjusting influence citizens' acceptance of video-mediated crime reporting: A narrative approach. *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 23(4): 305–22.
- Holton, J. & Grandy, G. 2016. Voiced inner dialogue as relational reflection-on-action: The case of middle managers in healthcare. *Management Learning*, 47(4): 369–90.
- Jarrett, M. & Liu, F. 2016. 'Zooming with': A participatory approach to the use of video ethnography in organizational studies. *Organizational Research Methods*, published online before print 11 July, 2016, doi: 10.1177/1094428116656238.
- Jarzabkowski P., LeBaron C., Phillips K. & Pratt M. 2014. Call for papers: Video-based research methods. *Organizational Research Methods*, 17(1): 3–4.
- Johnson, P. & Duberley, J. 2003. Reflexivity in management research. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(5): 1279–303.
- Johnson, P., Buehring, A., Cassell, C.M. & Symon, G. 2006. Evaluating qualitative management research: Towards a contingent criteriology. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 8(3): 131–56.
- Kaczynski, D., Salmona, M. & Smith, T. 2014. Qualitative research in finance. *Australian Journal of Management*, 39(1): 127–35.
- Knoblauch, H., Flick, U. & Maeder, C. (2005). Qualitative methods in Europe: The variety of social research. art 34., available at *Forum: Qualitative social research*, 6(3). Retrieved from: www.qualitative-research.net/fqs-texte/3-05/05-3-34-e.htm (11 May, 2016).
- Kozinets, R.V. 2010. *Netnography: Doing ethnographic research online*. London: Sage.
- Ladkin, D. 2014. 'In through the nose, out through the mouth': How conscious breathing can help mere mortals cope with the difficulties of leading. In Ladkin D. & Taylor S. (eds) *The physicality of leadership: Gesture, entanglement, taboo, possibilities. Monographs in Leadership and Management*, pp. 221–37. Bingley: Emerald Publishing Group.
- Lee, B. & Humphrey, C. 2006. More than a numbers game: Qualitative research in accounting. *Management Decision*, 44(2): 180–97.
- Lee, B., Collier, P.M. & Cullen, J. 2007. Reflection on the use of case studies in the accounting, management and organization disciplines. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 2(3): 169–78.
- McDonald, S. & Simpson, B. 2014. Shadowing research in organizations: The methodological debates. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 9(1): 3–20.
- Mavin, S. & Grandy, G. 2016a. A theory of abject appearance: Women elite leaders' intra-gender 'management' of bodies and appearance. *Human Relations*, 69(5): 1095–120.
- Mavin, S. & Grandy, G. (2016b) Women elite leaders doing respectable business femininity: How privilege is conferred, contested and defended through the body. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 23(4): 379–96.
- Meyer, R.E., Höllerer, M.A., Jancsary, D. & van Leeuwen, T.J. 2013. The visual dimension of organising, organization, and organization research: Core ideas, current developments and promising avenues. *Academy of Management Annals*, 7(1): 489–555.
- Moore, F. 2012. Identity, knowledge and strategy in the UK subsidiary of an Anglo-German automobile manufacturer. *International Business Review*, 21(2): 281–92.
- Morgan, S. & Symon, G. 2004. Electronic interviews in organizational research. In C.M. Cassell & G. Symon (eds) *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research*, pp. 23–33. London: Sage.
- Neergaard, H. & Ulhøj, J.P. 2008. *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- O'Leary, J. & Sandberg, J. 2016. Managers' practice of managing diversity revealed: A practice-theoretical account. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 38(4): 512–36.
- Pratt M. 2009. From the editors. For the lack of a boilerplate: Tips on writing up (and reviewing) qualitative research. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52(5): 856–62.
- Purli, A. 2007. The web of insights: The art and practice of webnography. *International Journal of Market Research*, 49(3): 387–408.
- Ray, J.L. & Smith, A.D. 2012. Using photographs to research organizations: Evidence, considerations, and application in a field study. *Organizational Research Methods*, 15(2): 288–315.

- Riach, K. & Warren, S. 2015. Smell organization: Bodies and corporeal porosity in office work. *Human Relations*, 68(5): 789–809.
- Ripamonti, S., Galuppo, L., Gorli, M., Scaratti, G. & Cunliffe, A.L. 2016. Pushing action research towards reflexive practice. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 25(1): 55–68.
- Rivera, K.D. & Tracy, S.J. 2014. Embodying emotional dirty work: A messy text of patrolling the border. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 9(3): 201–22.
- Rokka, J. & Canniford, R. 2016. Heterotopian selfies: How social media destabilizes brand assemblages. *European Journal of Marketing*, 50(9/10): 1789–813.
- Salmona, M., Kaczynski, D. & Smith, T. 2015. Qualitative theory in finance: Theory into practice. *Australian Journal of Management*, 40(3): 403–13.
- Salmons, J. 2015. *Qualitative online interviews: Strategies, design, and skills*. London: Sage (2nd edition).
- Sandberg, J. & Alvesson, M. 2010. Ways of constructing research questions: Gap-spotting or problematization? *Organization*, 18(1): 23–44.
- Shotter, J. 2008. Dialogism and polyphony in organizing theorizing in organization studies: Action guiding anticipations and the continuous creation of novelty. *Organization Studies*, 29(4): 501–24.
- Sinclair, A. 2005. Body and management pedagogy. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 12(1): 89–104.
- Sinclair, A. 2011. Leading with body. In E. Jeanes, D. Knights & P. Martin (eds) *Handbook of gender, work and organization*, pp. 117–30. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- Sinclair, A. 2014. On knees, breasts and being fully human in leadership. In S. Taylor & D. Ladkin (eds) *The physicality of leadership: Gesture, entanglement, taboo, possibilities. Monographs in Leadership and Management*, pp.177–197. Bingley: Emerald Publishing Group.
- Stewart K. & Williams, M. 2005. Researching online populations: The use of online focus groups for social research. *Qualitative Research*, 5(4): 385–416.
- Symon, G. & Cassell, C.M. 2004. Promoting new research practices in organizational research. In C.M. Cassell & G. Symon (eds) *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research*. London: Sage, pp. 1–10.
- Symon, G. & Cassell, C.M. 2006. Neglected perspectives in work and organizational psychology. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 79(3): 307–14.
- Symon, G. and Cassell, C.M. 2012. *Qualitative methods in organizational research: Core methods and current challenges*. London: Sage.
- Symon, G., Cassell, C.M. & Johnson, P. 2016. Evaluative practices in qualitative management research: A critical review. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, published online before print 13 September, 2016. doi: 10.1111/ijmr.12120.
- Townsend, K., Loudoun, R. & Lewin, D. 2016. *The Edward Elgar handbook of qualitative research methods on HRM: Innovative techniques*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Tracy, S.J. 2010. Qualitative quality: Eight ‘big-tent’ criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10): 837–51.
- Tracy, S.J., Eger, E.K., Huffman, T.P., Malvini Redden, S. & Scarduzio, J.A. 2014. Narrating the backstage of qualitative research in organizations: A synthesis. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 28(3): 423–32.
- Üsdiken, B. 2014. Centres and peripheries: Research styles and publication patterns in ‘top’ U.S. journals and their European alternatives, 1960–2010. *Journal of Management Studies*, 51(5): 764–89.
- Van Maanen, J. (1995). Style as theory. *Organization Science*, 6(1): 133–43.
- Weick, K.E. 2002. Essai: Real-time reflexivity: Prods to reflection. *Organization Studies*, 23(6): 893–98.
- Welch, C., Plakoyiannaki, E., Piekkari, R. & Paavilainen-Mäntymäki, E. 2013. Legitimizing diverse uses for qualitative research: A rhetorical analysis of two management journals. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15(2): 245–64.
- Zicker, M.J. & Carter, N.T. 2010. Reconnecting with the spirit of workplace ethnography: A historical review. *Organizational Research Methods*, 13(2): 304–19.

This page intentionally left blank

PART I

Influential Traditions



This page intentionally left blank

Positivist Qualitative Methods

Ning Su

POSITIVISM

Positivism is a major paradigm of academic inquiry. A paradigm represents a basic world-view collectively held by a community. Thomas Kuhn defines the concept of paradigm as ‘universally recognized scientific achievements that, for a time, provide model problems and solutions for a community of practitioners’ (Kuhn, 1996, p. 10). More broadly speaking, a paradigm can be viewed as a network of basic, metaphysical assumptions underlying an area of academic inquiry. Paradigms can be categorized along several key dimensions, including ontology, which addresses whether the ‘reality’ represents an objective existence external to and independent from individual cognition, or a product of individuals’ subjective consciousness; epistemology, which addresses how the world can be understood and how such knowledge can be transmitted among human beings; and methodology, which addresses whether the researcher focuses on identifying and

verifying the relationships and regularities between the various elements, or analyzing individuals’ subjective experience and interpretation, of the world (e.g. Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

Positivism has a long history and a critical role in the development of science. According to some, the tradition of positivism can be traced back to the time of the Renaissance. For example, Italian scientist and scholar Galileo Galilei’s (1564–1642) *Sidereus Nuncius*, or *The Starry Messenger* (1610), included using systematic astronomical observations to prove and extend the Copernican model. This work was to some extent the precursor of modern positivist science (Drake, 1978). French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798–1857) was considered the founder of the doctrine of positivism and the discipline of sociology. Comte’s work proposed that society evolves through three successive stages: the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive (Giddens, 1972). In his account of the structure of sciences,

Comte emphasized data of experience as the basis of knowledge. After Comte, positivism, more broadly defined, developed through different phases pioneered by different schools in history. Examples include critical positivism pioneered by Ernst Mach (1838–1916), and the subsequent logical positivism, logical empiricism, or neo-positivism in the twentieth century embracing examples of empirical sciences in philosophy (e.g. Bunge, 1996).

In today's sociological studies, especially those focusing on business and management, the use of the word 'positivist' frequently emphasizes an objectivist epistemology which seeks to 'explain and predict what happens in the social world by searching for regularities and causal relationships between its constituent elements' (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 5). Consistent with the dominant, traditional approaches in the natural sciences, such objectivist epistemology assumes that the phenomenon under investigation and the investigator have an independent relationship, where knowledge accumulates as new verified hypotheses are added to the existing stock of knowledge and falsified hypotheses eliminated (*ibid.*). This objectivist epistemological position usually lies on the foundation of an ontology that assumes the existence of the physical and social world to be an external reality; this reality can be apprehended through the construction of a set of time- and context-free generalizations capturing the essence of the reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Aligned with these ontological and epistemological assumptions, positivist research tends to emphasize the identification and empirical testing of hypotheses in propositional form, with quantitative approaches such as surveys and controlled experiments being the most common methods (*ibid.*).

POSITIVISM AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The history of qualitative research can be traced back to the various social investigations

in the nineteenth century and the subsequent development of anthropology and sociology (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Today, 'qualitative research' has evolved into a vibrant and somewhat contested field, rather than a monolithic approach with clearly defined boundaries. In business and management, the term 'qualitative research' has been used by different scholars in different, and sometimes contradictory, ways. According to Van Maanen (1979, p. 520), 'the label qualitative methods has no precise meaning in any of the social sciences. It is at best an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world'. Similarly, Strauss & Corbin (1998, p. 10) refer to qualitative research as 'any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification'. Such research centers on a 'nonmathematical process of interpretation, carried out for the purpose of discovering concepts and relationships in raw data and then organizing these into a theoretical explanatory scheme' (*ibid.*, p. 11). Overall, common to many of the definitions of qualitative research is a focus on the phenomenon in its relatively natural setting and a non-mathematical data analysis process.

The positivist paradigm and qualitative research methods may seem to contradict each other. Specifically, positivism was traditionally considered to be chiefly associated with quantitative methods, whereas qualitative research tends to be associated with more subjectivist positions of the researchers. However, the positivist paradigm and qualitative methods can coexist in harmony. In fact, positivist qualitative research represents a uniquely useful and extensively adopted genre of academic inquiry. Ontologically, positivist qualitative research assumes the existence of an objective, external reality that can be apprehended and summarized, although not readily quantified. Epistemologically, positivist qualitative research focuses on

searching for, through non-statistical means, regularities and causal relationships between different elements of the reality, and summarizing identified patterns into generalized findings. Methodologically, positivist qualitative research tends to emphasize a nomothetic rather than idiographic approach; this approach utilizes systematic research protocols and techniques to develop and test theoretical models or propositions in accordance with the canons of scientific rigor (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

Furthermore, when carefully combined, positivism and qualitative research form a synergistic relationship. The complementarity between the positivist stance and qualitative methods manifests itself in several ways. First, qualitative methods expand the scope of positivist research. Qualitative research is especially suitable for exploring emerging phenomena and identifying new theory development opportunities. For example, Bourgeois & Eisenhardt (1988) examined the then rapidly emerging microcomputer industry, and identified the decision-making processes in industries with extremely high rates of technological and competitive change, which the authors termed 'high-velocity' environments. The notion of high-velocity industry has since inspired a rich stream of research (e.g. Eisenhardt, 1989a; Bogner & Barr, 2000; Clark & Collins, 2002).

Second, qualitative methods extend the depth of positivist research. For example, Mintzberg's (1978) seminal work on the patterns in strategy formation distinguished between emergent and deliberate strategy. Building on the conceptualization of strategy as patterned action, Mirabeau & Maguire's (2014) publication further unpacked the process by which emergent strategy originates from autonomous strategic behavior and eventually becomes realized within organizational settings. Capitalizing on qualitative methods, this stream of research on emergent strategy offers an increasingly refined, in-depth view of strategy formation, while opening up new avenues for further examination.

Third, qualitative methods enrich the context of positivist research. Qualitative methods are especially valuable for exploring dynamic, embedded phenomena such as historical change, contextual fields, and social processes, which often cannot be adequately captured by quantitative techniques. For example, Burgelman (1994) examined the Intel Corporation's strategic business exit processes in dynamic environments. Dyer & Nobeoka (2000) investigated the Toyota Corporation's creation and management of knowledge-sharing processes with its supplier network. Both studies offer context-rich, memorable examples of critical management issues, concepts, and theoretical findings.

Finally, positivist qualitative research can be readily integrated with quantitative methods. There are different ways to combine these two approaches. For example, McNamara & Bromiley (1997) used interviews with corporate managers at a bank to explore how to empirically test a set of hypotheses, before developing a model based on the available data for further quantitative analysis. Koh et al. (2004) conducted two complementary studies, with a qualitative study identifying specific psychological contract obligations in information technology (IT) outsourcing relationships, and a quantitative study testing the impact of fulfilled obligations on IT outsourcing success.

POSITIVIST QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PROCESS

In positivist qualitative research, the input of the research process typically consists of a variety of data, especially unstructured data. The sources of data include interviews, observations, videos, and documents (Patton, 2001). These different formats of data are extensively used in different fields of business and management (e.g. Gersick, 1989; Orlikowski, 2002; Kane et al., 2014). Interviews usually consist of open-ended or

semi-structured questions about subjects' experience, perceptions, and knowledge. In the final publication, interviews are usually incorporated in the form of direct quotations. Observations and videos capture actions, interactions, conversations, practices, processes, and other dynamics at multiple levels, including individual, interpersonal, group, community, organizational, interorganizational, and industry. The data are incorporated into the final publication as field notes. Documents include written records, official publications and reports, correspondence, press releases, memorabilia, artistic works, photographs, films, and videotapes. Excerpts of documents can be included in the final publication to support and explain the findings. A key benefit of utilizing the diverse forms of data is the creation of a 'thick description' capturing both detailed content and rich context of the studied phenomena (e.g. Geertz, 1973).

Positivist qualitative research in business and management emphasizes novel, relevant, testable, and empirically valid theories as output (e.g. Eisenhardt, 1989b). The specific output can take different forms. The most common types include new themes, patterns, concepts, insights, and propositions (e.g. Patton, 2001). Specifically, in theoretical qualitative research, findings can consist of formal concepts and frameworks. For example, based on interviews within a large multinational corporation, Burgelman (1983) identified a process model of internal corporate venturing in major diversified firms. Leveraging 'direct research' (Mintzberg, 1979), Mintzberg & McHugh (1985) elaborated strategy formation in an 'adhocracy' and emphasized the type of 'emergent' strategies. In more applied types of qualitative research, the findings can consist of a set of substantive practices. For example, Peters & Waterman (1982) used qualitative inquiry to identify a set of patterns among the best-run companies in the US. Similarly, Covey (1990) discovered seven habits of highly effective individuals. To convert varied forms

of qualitative data into high-quality findings, a number of research methodologies have been developed and adopted. The most prominent methodologies related to positivist qualitative research include grounded theory and case study.

POSITIVIST QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AND GROUNDED THEORY

Grounded theory represents a widely used methodology applicable across different paradigms (Walsh et al., 2015). Grounded theory was pioneered by Glaser & Strauss (1967). The principles behind grounded theory are well aligned with positivism (Bryant, 2002). The tenets of grounded theory have also provided a valuable toolkit for qualitative researchers (Holton & Walsh, 2016) and contributed to the legitimization and systemization of qualitative research methods. Before Glaser and Strauss's work, qualitative research methods mostly focused on using an explicit coding procedure to convert qualitative data into a 'crudely quantifiable form' for further testing of provisional hypotheses, or focused on generating theoretical ideas, including new concepts, properties, and hypotheses, without going through a systematic coding process. Combining prior approaches, Glaser (1965) created the constant comparative method, which achieved the twin goals of generating theory more systematically through explicit coding and supporting provisional testing of hypotheses.

Glaser & Strauss (1967, p. 106) explain 'the basic, defining rule for the constant comparative method' as, 'while coding an incident for a category, compare it with the previous incidents in the same and different groups coded in the same category'. Specifically, this process can be described in four stages. The first stage involves comparing incidents applicable to each category emerging from the data. Through constant

comparison, the researcher identifies each category's dimensions, conditions, consequences, and relation to other categories. The second stage centers on integrating categories and properties. As the researcher continues making sense of the data, the diverse categories and properties start to relate to one another and become a more unified whole. The third stage focuses on delimiting the theory. As the emergent theory solidifies and the list of categories becomes theoretically saturated, the researcher starts discovering the underlying uniformity in the categories and properties. This results in the formulation of the theory with a smaller set of higher-level concepts. The fourth stage presents the coded data, memos, and the theory in writing. The constant comparative method can be applied to generate both substantive theories, which address specific empirical areas of inquiry, and formal theories, which center on conceptual areas of inquiry. Constant comparison constitutes the core of the Glaserian approach of grounded theory methodology.

Strauss & Corbin's (1990) subsequent work on a different approach to grounded theory methodology prescribed a set of systematic and specific techniques for developing theory from qualitative data (*ibid.*; Corbin & Strauss, 1990). These techniques center on three basic types of coding: open, axial, and selective. Open coding involves an interpretive process by which the data are broken down analytically and given conceptual labels. In open coding, events, actions, and interactions are compared with others for similarities and differences; conceptually similar events, actions, or interactions are grouped together to form categories and subcategories. Axial coding relates categories to their subcategories through the 'coding paradigm' of conditions, context, action or interaction strategies, and consequences. The hypothetical relationships proposed deductively are verified repeatedly against incoming data, while the development of categories continues as the data accumulate. Selective coding takes place in the later phases of the

study. The selective coding process unifies all categories around a core category. The core category might emerge from the identified categories, or take the form of a more abstract term. The core category emerging from selective coding represents the central phenomenon of the study.

These specific and systematic coding techniques introduced by Strauss & Corbin (1990) have been extensively adopted by qualitative studies in business and management. For example, to explore how cooperation emerged in a highly competitive setting, Browning et al. (1995) conducted a grounded theory analysis of observation, interview, and archival data collected at a consortium in the semiconductor manufacturing industry. In the data analysis, the researchers first performed open coding, assigning each incident in the entire data set to an emergent open coding scheme. The resulting 130 codes were subsequently reduced into increasingly abstract categories through axial coding, which produced 24 categories. Finally, in a process of selective coding, these categories were further collapsed and renamed, yielding the 17 categories as the paper's key results. Based on these categories, the authors then identified and drew on complexity theory as a novel framework to further explain and theorize from the phenomenon (*ibid.*). As another example, Harrison & Rouse (2015) followed a three-stage process, including developing first-order concepts through open coding, discovering second-order themes through axial coding, and aggregating theoretical dimensions by iterating between data and theory. The analytical process allowed the authors to inductively build a process model explaining feedback interactions in creative projects.

Both Glaserian and Straussian approaches to grounded theory have laid the foundation of qualitative research, and some studies have drawn on elements from both. Meanwhile, these two approaches also differ significantly. The divide was evident in Glaser's (1992) criticism of the Straussian approach. Several differences are most salient. First, the

Glaserian approach requires the researcher to rely on theoretical sensitivity and investigate the field without bringing precise research questions or preconceived theories. The Straussian approach, in contrast, allows the guidance of predefined research questions and preexisting theoretical frameworks. Second, the Glaserian approach emphasizes an inductive analytic process, where theories strictly emerge from the data. The Straussian approach combines elements of both inductive and deductive methods, and centers on abductive reasoning which involves continual validation. Abduction refers to ‘a type of reasoning that begins by examining data and after scrutiny of these data, entertains all possible explanations for the observed data, and then forms a hypothesis to confirm or disconfirm until the researcher arrives at the most plausible interpretation of the observed data’ (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 186). Third, the Glaserian approach relies on substantive coding and theoretical coding to form theoretical models. The Straussian approach has specified a coding paradigm, with the potential risk of ‘forcing’ categories on the data (Glaser, 1992), but can help researchers generate findings in a structured manner.

In exploring the philosophical underpinnings of grounded theory, subsequent investigations have suggested that while extensively adopted by interpretivist research, both the Glaserian and Straussian approaches, as the foundation of the grounded theory methodology, in fact, have a significant level of consistency with the positivist paradigm (e.g. Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Charmaz, 2000; Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). For example, the Glaserian approach builds on ‘assumptions of an objective, external reality, a neutral observer who discovers data, reductionist inquiry of manageable research problems, and objectivist rendering of data’ (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 510). The Straussian approach embeds similar assumptions, with additional emphasis on the positivism-inclined process of provisional verification of the findings.

Meanwhile, it is worth noting that other aspects of the grounded theory methodology also resonate with other paradigms, especially as the grounded theory approach has also evolved over time (e.g. Annells, 1997; Bryant, 2002). For example, some argue that the Glaserian school assumes a critical realist approach, whereas the Straussian school aligns with a relativist and constructivist stance (Annells, 1997).

As grounded theory becomes increasingly adopted by researchers and adapted in different ways, Charmaz (2000; 2001; 2006; 2008) suggests that the methodology can be broadly categorized into two forms: constructivist and objectivist grounded theory. Constructivist grounded theory is aligned with the interpretive tradition. It emphasizes the phenomena of study and views data and theoretical analysis as closely intertwined, and co-created through the interaction and interpretation of the researcher and research participants. The theory emerging from this experience is therefore an interpretation that is based on, and specific to, the researcher’s view. Objectivist grounded theory is ‘a form of positivist qualitative research’ (Charmaz, 2006, p. 188). It views data as representing external, knowable reality and theoretical analysis as a process of careful discovery by unbiased observers. Objectivist grounded theory, therefore, emphasizes stricter adherence to the prescribed research procedures. This constructivist–objectivist dichotomy provides the clarity much needed for distinguishing different grounded theory studies. Meanwhile, a specific study might contain elements of both approaches and whether the study can be judged to be constructivist or objectivist ‘depends on the extent to which its key characteristics conform to one tradition or the other’ (ibid., p. 130). Overall, grounded theory has been embraced by positivist qualitative researchers and has in part inspired the creation and systemization of related research methodologies and strategies. A prominent example is case study.

POSITIVIST QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AND CASE STUDY

Case study represents an important genre of social science research. The early major proponents of case study research include the works of Yin (1981a; 1981b; 1984; 2014) and Stake (1978; 1995; 2005). Yin (1984) defines case study as an overarching research strategy and outlines its defining features. Specifically, ‘a case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result, relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis’ (Yin, 2003, p. 13). This is consistent with Stake’s (1995; 2005) definition of a case as a functioning body, a bounded system, ‘not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied’ (2005, p. 443), and case study as ‘both a process of inquiry about the case and the product of that inquiry’ (2005, p. 444). Case study usually differs from the other forms of research in that it focuses on the in-depth investigation of a phenomenon in its real-world context, and is especially valuable when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are ambiguous (Yin, 2003). Case study is inclusive and pluralistic, with the potential to accommodate diverse paradigms and research techniques, both qualitative and quantitative (ibid.; Stake, 2005).

Qualitative researchers have been especially active in embracing case study, frequently citing the seminal work of Yin and Stake. Yin and Stake’s approaches, meanwhile, also have significant differences. Yin’s (1984; 2014) descriptions of case study tend to be oriented toward a ‘realist’ perspective. The meticulous and methodical guidelines provided by Yin make the work especially valuable for positivist qualitative research. According to Yin, case studies can

be categorized into three types: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory; case studies can also be categorized into single or multiple cases and holistic or embedded cases. The single-case study is appropriate when the case is critical to confirming, challenging, or extending the examined theory, extreme or unusual by deviating from norms, common in everyday occurrences, revelatory of previously inaccessible phenomena, or longitudinal by investigating the same case at multiple points in time. Single-case studies encompass holistic and embedded designs. A holistic design examines the global nature of the case, whereas an embedded design investigates multiple subunits within the case. In the multiple-case study, several cases are selected to serve either as literal replications by predicting similar results, or theoretical replications by predicting contrasting results. A multiple-case study may also consist of multiple holistic or embedded cases. A special type of multiple-case study is a two-case study, with the second case serving as confirmation or contrast (ibid.).

Stake’s (1978; 1995; 2005) approach to case study, in comparison, seems more consistent with the interpretivist or constructivist paradigm (e.g. Appleton, 2002; Grandy, 2010). For example, Stake’s (1995) seminal text *The Art of Case Study Research* often emphasizes construction rather than discovery of knowledge and multiple perspectives about cases. Stake also categorizes case studies into three types: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. Intrinsic case study focuses on understanding one particular case, with the case itself – rather than some abstract construct or generic phenomenon – representing the focus of interest. An instrumental case study, instead, is undertaken to generate insights into an issue or derive generalizable conclusions. Collective, or multiple, case study is conducted when several cases are examined jointly for the purpose of investigating a phenomenon, population, or general condition. Overall, the more ‘intrinsic’ the interest of inquiry is in the case, the

more the study focuses on the case's idiosyncratic context, issue, and story. Stake's work differs from Yin's methodical, positivist-oriented approach, but collectively these two approaches enrich the repertoire of methods for qualitative research.

Eisenhardt (1989b) further formalized theory-building from multiple-case study research into a nine-step process. This model has incorporated elements of Yin's (1984) approach as well as grounded theory (e.g. Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987). Specifically, first, the researcher defines the research focus and question. A priori specification of constructs is allowed, but the initial theoretical framework is tentative. Second, cases are chosen through theoretical sampling, as new cases are added to replicate previous cases, extend emergent theory, fill theoretical categories, or serve as examples of polar types. Third, research instruments and protocols are crafted based on the research question. Fourth, data collecting overlaps with analysis through the continuous creation of field notes. Fifth, within-case analysis allows the unique patterns of each case to emerge. Sixth, cross-case comparison identifies higher-level patterns. Tactics such as using categories or dimensions, conducting pairwise analysis, and dividing the data by sources, can be applied. Seventh, iterative tabulation of evidence continuously sharpens constructs and verifies relationships, yielding a theory that fits closely with data. Eighth, the emergent concepts, theory, or hypotheses are compared with the extant literature. Finally, theoretical saturation signals the closure of the iterative theory building process (*ibid.*). This well-defined, structured process aligns closely with the positivist paradigm, and has been extensively adopted by positivist qualitative research in business and management over the last decades (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

As an example, Brown & Eisenhardt (1997) used a multiple-case study of six firms in the computer industry to examine how organizations can successfully engage in continuous change. Specifically, the authors first

positioned the study in the theoretical literature on organizational change, which focused on the punctuated equilibrium model and radical change. Having identified the important but understudied continuous, incremental change as the research focus, the authors selected six computer firms, using each firm as a replication to confirm or disconfirm emerging conceptual insights. The authors visited the firms and conducted semi-structured, open-ended interviews with both lower- and higher-level managers regarding the evolution of product development projects. Using the interviews as well as supplementary data, the authors wrote an independent case study for each firm, with a focus on the features of multiple-product innovation. Through subsequent comparison of different permutations of pairs of cases for similarities and differences, a set of organizational structures and processes related to continuous change emerged. The author crystallized the findings into three key properties: 'semisttructures', 'links in time', and 'sequenced steps', and finally linked the ideas to existing literatures, including complexity theory and the resource-based view of the firm, to make further theoretical contributions (*ibid.*). This study uses a methodical approach to search for the 'objective', generalizable best practices, and demonstrates a clear positivist orientation. Other examples following this approach include the studies of Hallen & Eisenhardt (2012), Davis & Eisenhardt (2013), and Su (2013).

POSITIVIST QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN DIVERSE DISCIPLINES

Positivist qualitative studies have been adopted by many disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, policy, law, health, education, and business. In business, positivist qualitative research has been applied in many major fields, including, but not limited to, management, information systems, international business, organizational behavior,

marketing, accounting, and operations. In management, qualitative research, with both positivist and non-positivist stances, has been extensively applied (Lee, 1991; Bansal & Corley, 2011). Similarly, in information systems, there is a plurality of qualitative research approaches, both positivist and non-positivist (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991; Mingers, 2001; Dubé & Paré, 2003). The field of international business also moves toward methodological pluralism by embracing diverse approaches, including both positivist and ‘alternative’ qualitative research (Welch et al., 2011). In organizational behavior, qualitative research has long had an important place (Johns, 2006). The field of marketing has long embraced qualitative methods as well (Calder, 1977; Belk, 2007), although qualitative research tends to be associated with an interpretivist approach in marketing. In the field of accounting, similarly, qualitative research in general has a long tradition (Chua, 1986; Vaivio, 2008). In operations management, there has been an increasing use of qualitative research (Barratt et al., 2011). Many of the qualitative studies in the field of operations management adopt a positivist stance.

While the prevalence of positivist qualitative research varies with specific disciplines and publication outlets, the approach has established its position as a key genre of publication. The following are some examples of empirical research leveraging positivist qualitative methods. Positivist qualitative research regularly appears in the *Academy of Management Journal* (e.g. Hallen & Eisenhardt, 2012), *Administrative Science Quarterly* (e.g. Lawrence & Dover, 2015), *Organization Science* (e.g. Cattani et al., 2013), the *Strategic Management Journal* (e.g. Joseph & Ocasio, 2012), the *Journal of International Business Studies* (e.g. Orr & Scott, 2008), *MIS Quarterly* (e.g. Levina & Ross, 2003), and *Information Systems Research* (e.g. Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1998).

Since positivist qualitative research shares the same philosophical stance as many quantitative studies, journals with a

quantitative focus have also featured positivist qualitative studies, complementing quantitative research. Examples of these outlets include *Management Science* (e.g. Faraj & Xiao, 2006), *Production and Operations Management* (e.g. Pagell et al., 2014), the *Journal of Operations Management* (e.g. Choi & Hong, 2002), and *Decision Sciences* (e.g. Levina & Su, 2008). In addition, positivist qualitative research is especially valuable for identifying and illustrating ‘best practices’ from multiple business cases. This approach has therefore been extensively applied in publications in practitioner-oriented journals, such as the *Harvard Business Review* (e.g. Lacity et al., 1995) and the *MIT Sloan Management Review* (e.g. Su et al., 2016).

Across these disciplines, positivist qualitative research has provided a useful toolkit for studying a wide range of phenomena. These phenomena encompass multiple levels, from microfoundations to macro dynamics, spanning the levels of individual, group, organizational subunit, organization, and interorganizational network (Hitt et al., 2007). For example, at the individual level, Molinsky (2013) used self-reflections of 50 students to understand the psychological mechanisms by which individuals adapt to new cultural settings. At the organizational level, Su (2013) used 95 interviews with middle- and senior-level managers, direct observations, and archival data at 13 offshore IT service suppliers – which encompassed all the most globally recognized players in China’s IT outsourcing industry – to examine how these organizations grow their business in multiple markets and make decisions regarding their internationalization. At the interorganizational level, Dyer & Nobeoka (2000) combined interviews with more than 30 executives from Toyota; interviews with executives from 10 of Toyota’s first-tier suppliers in Japan and 11 Toyota suppliers in the US; and archival and survey data to examine how the company creates and manages a high-performance, knowledge-sharing production network. All these studies have

both offered rich depictions of complex, contemporary phenomena and made significant, novel contributions to theories.

POSITIVIST QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN THE AGE OF DIGITIZATION AND GLOBALIZATION

Positivist qualitative research has unique value propositions in today's business environment. Our world is being transformed by two major trends: digitization and globalization (Manyika et al., 2011, 2014). The emergence of information and communications technologies is changing the foundation and fabric of economies and societies, giving rise to new forms of organizing (e.g. Boudreau & Lakhani, 2013; Kuek et al., 2015; Lifshitz-Assaf, forthcoming), while disrupting incumbent ones. A variety of innovative digital technologies, such as the mobile Internet (e.g. Ghose et al., 2013), cloud computing (e.g. Su, 2011), big data (e.g. Tambe, 2014) and analytics (e.g. Martens et al., 2016), 3D printing (e.g. Su & Pirani, 2013), search engine (e.g. Ghose et al. 2014), online recommendation systems (e.g. Panniello et al., 2016), and artificial intelligence (e.g. Dhar, 2016), are shaping the world's informational, economic, and social relationships (e.g. El Sawy et al., 2010; Sundararajan et al., 2013; Dhar et al., 2014) and giving rise to new industries and market categories.

Simultaneously, digitization accelerates globalization (e.g. Agerfalk & Fitzgerald, 2008; Chen & Horton, 2016; Aral et al., 2017). The global flow of capital, trade, and increasingly, information, ideas, and innovation, has shifted the world's business landscape (Manyika et al., 2014). Emerging markets have grown into not only new hubs of global commerce in terms of scale, but also worldwide centers of innovation and entrepreneurship (e.g. *The Economist*, 2015). Emerging market-based organizations, and

their underlying socioeconomic ecosystems, are largely new and can differ significantly from traditional ones. For example, research has shown that in emerging markets, individuals' sensemaking and organizations' strategic decision-making can be especially dynamic and innovative (Su, 2015). The convergence of digitization and globalization leads to increasing innovation and interaction, thereby presenting new opportunities and a compelling need for further academic inquiry.

In this rapidly changing environment, positivist qualitative research can be an especially valuable tool for advancing academic theories, for several reasons. First, qualitative research is suitable for investigating the emergent, ambiguous, dynamic, and less-understood phenomena brought about by digitization and globalization. In this environment, the flexible, contextualized characteristics of qualitative inquiry have an advantage over quantitative methods because qualitative research is 'open to unanticipated events' and 'offers holistic depictions of realities' (Rynes & Gephart, 2004, p. 455) that encompass a wide range of variables, relationships, meanings, and processes.

Second, positivist qualitative research, particularly, can help motivate researchers with a positivist stance to explore these emerging phenomena. Positivist researchers represent a large academic community. Some disciplines, such as finance and operations, or topics, such as big data and analytics research, mostly adopt a positivist paradigm. A positivist stance can help engage a dialogue with a diverse set of communities. Positivist qualitative research can also be readily combined with quantitative methods. For example, the theoretical concepts, relationships, and frameworks that emerge from positivist qualitative research can be further examined with quantitative methods. Such integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches can enrich our understanding of diverse phenomena.

Third, the positivist paradigm accepts the notion of the 'generalizability' of findings. When studying the emerging phenomena in

digitization and globalization, researchers are able, therefore, to examine whether these new phenomena can generate new theories, whether the new theories can help reconceptualize existing phenomena, whether the new phenomena can in fact be understood by existing theories, and whether the new phenomena are qualitatively different from existing ones. These questions can meaningfully contribute to the creation and accumulation of knowledge.

Finally, from a methodological perspective, the trends of digitization and globalization give rise to new opportunities and challenges. The increasing availability of data, combined with the innovative application of analytic techniques such as data mining, can potentially complement or even extend traditional positivist qualitative methods. Data in different languages and from diverse cultural contexts could also become a rich source of information and inspiration for theory development.

Overall, embracing a plurality of philosophical perspectives and research methods allows scholars to examine the changing landscape of global business from diverse frames of reference. Positivist qualitative research, with its significant tradition and extensive adoption in diverse disciplines, provides an important toolkit for understanding today's ever-changing economy and society.

CONCLUSION

Positivist qualitative research represents an important, established genre of academic inquiry. Ontologically, it assumes an objective external reality that is apprehensible although not readily quantifiable. Epistemologically, it focuses on identifying regularities, relationships, patterns, and generalizable findings from this reality. Methodologically, it emphasizes the application of systematic protocols and techniques to develop and test theoretical models or propositions based on the canons of scientific

rigor. When carefully designed and meticulously executed, positivist qualitative research can synergistically combine the strengths of positivist paradigm and qualitative inquiry. Based on diverse forms of data, positivist qualitative research generates novel and reliable concepts and theories regarding complex and oftentimes contemporary phenomena. Grounded theory is a widely used methodology for positivist qualitative research, while case study prescribes methodical procedures that are especially useful for generating positivist theoretical insights from qualitative data. Diverse disciplines have embraced positivist qualitative research.

Positivist qualitative research has its challenges. Due to its oftentimes field-based nature and highly methodical research process, it can require significant time and commitment, as well as access to research sites for in-depth investigation. Demonstration of rigor by following the prescribed procedures and guidelines is important (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Dubé & Paré, 2003; Siggelkow, 2007; Gibbert et al., 2008; Yin, 2014). Meanwhile, however, a key merit of positivist qualitative research, as well as qualitative inquiry in general, is the celebration of novelty and creativity (Bansal & Corley, 2011). Therefore, researchers should also actively explore different styles within positivist qualitative research and pursue methodological innovation. When applying positivist qualitative methods, researchers need to maintain a fine balance between rigor and creativity, and seek to generate insights that are both empirically valid and theoretically ground-breaking. Today's age of digitization and globalization can represent an excellent opportunity for applying and advancing positivist qualitative research.

REFERENCES

- Agerfalk, P. J. & Fitzgerald, B. 2008. 'Outsourcing to an Unknown Workforce: Exploring Opensourcing as a Global Sourcing Strategy', *MIS Quarterly* (32:2), pp. 385–409.

- Annells, M. 1997. 'Grounded Theory Method, Part I: Within the Five Moments of Qualitative Research', *Nursing Inquiry* (4), pp. 120–129.
- Appleton, J. V. 2002. 'Critiquing Approaches to Case Study Design for a Constructivist Inquiry', *Qualitative Research Journal* (2:2), pp. 80–97.
- Aral, S., Bakos, Y., & Brynjolfsson, E. 2017. 'Information Technology, Repeated Contracts, and the Number of Suppliers', *Management Science* (Articles in Advance), pp. 1–21.
- Bansal, P. & Corley, K. 2011. 'From the Editors: The Coming of Age for Qualitative Research: Embracing the Diversity of Qualitative Methods', *Academy of Management Journal* (54:2), pp. 233–237.
- Barratt, M., Choi, T. Y., & Li, M. 2011. 'Qualitative Case Studies in Operations Management: Trends, Research Outcomes, and Future Research Implications', *Journal of Operations Management* (29), pp. 329–342.
- Belk, R. W. 2007. *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Marketing*, Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc.
- Bogdan, R. C. & Biklen, S. K. 1982. *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods*, Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bogner, W. C. & Barr, P. S. 2000. 'Making Sense in Hypercompetitive Environments: A Cognitive Explanation for the Persistence of High Velocity Competition', *Organization Science* (11:2), pp. 212–226.
- Boudreau, K. J. & Lakhani, K. R. 2013. 'Using the Crowd as an Innovation Partner', *Harvard Business Review* (91:4), pp. 61–69.
- Bourgeois, L. J. & Eisenhardt, K. M. 1988. 'Strategic Decision Processes in High Velocity Environments: Four Cases in the Microcomputer Industry', *Management Science* (34:7), pp. 816–835.
- Bower, J. L. & Christensen, C. M. 1995. 'Disruptive Technologies: Catching the Wave', *Harvard Business Review* (73:1), pp. 43–53.
- Brown, S. L. & Eisenhardt, K. M. 1997. 'The Art of Continuous Change: Linking Complexity Theory and Time-Paced Evolution in Relentlessly Shifting Organizations', *Administrative Science Quarterly* (42:1), pp. 1–34.
- Browning, L. D., Beyer, J. M., & Shetler, J. C. 1995. 'Building Cooperation in a Competitive Industry: Sematech and the Semiconductor Industry', *Academy of Management Journal* (38:1), pp. 113–151.
- Bryant, A. 2002. 'Re-grounding Grounded Theory', *The Journal of Information Technology Theory and Application* (4:1), pp. 25–42.
- Bryant, A. & Charmaz, K. (eds.). 2007. *The SAGE Handbook of Grounded Theory*, London: Sage.
- Bunge, M. A. 1996. *Finding Philosophy in Social Science*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Burgelman, R. A. 1983. 'A Process Model of Internal Corporate Venturing in the Diversified Major Firm', *Administrative Science Quarterly* (28:2), pp. 223–244.
- Burgelman, R. A. 1994. 'A Process Theory of Strategic Business Exit in Dynamic Environments', *Administrative Science Quarterly* (39:1), pp. 24–56.
- Burrell, G. & Morgan, G. 1979. *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis*, London: Heinemann.
- Calder, B. J. 1977. 'Focus Groups and the Nature of Qualitative Marketing Research', *Journal of Marketing Research* (14:3), pp. 353–364.
- Cattani, G., Dunbar, R. L. M., & Shapira, Z. 2013. 'Value Creation and Knowledge Loss: The Case of Cremonese Stringed Instruments', *Organization Science* (24:3), pp. 813–830.
- Charmaz, K. 2000. 'Grounded Theory: Objectivist and Constructivist Methods', in N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd edition), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 509–535.
- Charmaz, K. 2001. 'Qualitative Interviewing and Grounded Theory Analysis', in J. E. Gubrium and J. A. Holstein (eds.), *Handbook of Interview Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 675–694.
- Charmaz, K. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*, London: Sage.
- Charmaz, K. 2008. 'Constructionism and the Grounded Theory Method', in J. A. Holstein & J. F. Gubrium (eds.), *Handbook of Constructionist Research*, New York: The Guilford Press, pp. 397–412.

- Chen, D. L. & Horton, J. J. 2016. 'Are Online Labor Markets Spot Markets for Tasks? A Field Experiment on the Behavioral Response to Wage Cuts', *Information Systems Research* (27:2), pp. 403–423.
- Choi, T. Y. & Hong, Y. 2002. 'Unveiling the Structure of Supply Networks: Case Studies in Honda, Acura, and Daimler Chrysler', *Journal of Operations Management* (20), pp. 469–493.
- Chua, W. F. 1986. 'Radical Developments in Accounting Thought', *The Accounting Review* (61:4), pp. 601–632.
- Clark, K. D. & Collins, C. 2002. 'Strategic Decision Making in High Velocity Environments: A Theory Revisited and a Test', in M. A. Hitt, R. Amit, C. Lucier, & R. D. Nixon (eds.), *Creating Value: Winners in the New Business Environment*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002, pp. 213–239.
- Corbin, J. M. & Strauss, A. L. 1990. 'Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons, and Evaluative Criteria', *Qualitative Sociology* (13), pp. 3–21.
- Covey, S. R. 1990. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, New York: Free Press.
- Davis, J. P. & Eisenhardt, K. M. 2011. 'Rotating Leadership and Collaborative Innovation: Recombination Processes in Symbiotic Relationships', *Administrative Science Quarterly* (56:2), pp. 159–201.
- Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. 1994. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, London: Sage.
- Dhar, V. 2016. 'The Future of Artificial Intelligence', *Big Data* (4:1), pp. 5–9.
- Dhar, V., Geva, T., Oestreicher-Singer, G., & Sundararajan, A. 2014. 'Prediction in Economic Networks', *Information Systems Research* (25:2), pp. 264–284.
- Drake, S. 1978. *Galileo at Work: His Scientific Biography*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Dubé, L. & Paré, G. 2003. 'Rigor in Information Systems Positivist Case Research: Current Practices, Trends, and Recommendations', *MIS Quarterly* (27:4), pp. 597–636.
- Dyer, J. H. and Nobeoka, K. 2000. 'Creating and Managing a High Performance Knowledge-Sharing Network: The Toyota Case', *Strategic Management Journal* (21), pp. 345–367.
- Eisenhardt, K. M. 1989a. 'Making Fast Strategic Decisions in High-Velocity Environments', *Academy of Management Journal* (32:3), pp. 543–576.
- Eisenhardt, K. M. 1989b. 'Building Theories from Case Study Research', *Academy of Management Review* (14:4), pp. 532–550.
- Eisenhardt, K. M. & Graebner, M. E. 2007. 'Theory Building From Cases: Opportunities and Challenges', *Academy of Management Journal* (50:1), pp. 25–32.
- El Sawy, O. A., Malhotra, A., Park, Y., & Pavlou, P. A. 2010. 'Seeking the Configurations of Digital Ecodynamics: It Takes Three to Tango', *Information Systems Research* (21:4), pp. 835–848.
- Faraj, S. & Xiao, Y. 2006. 'Coordination in Fast-Response Organizations', *Management Science* (52:8), pp. 1155–1169.
- Geertz, C. 1973. 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture', in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, New York: Basic Books, pp. 3–30.
- Gersick, C. J. G. 1989. 'Marking Time: Predictable Transitions in Task Groups', *Academy of Management Journal* (32:2), pp. 274–309.
- Ghose, A., Goldfarb, A., & Han, S. 2013. 'How is the Mobile Internet Different? Search Costs and Local Activities', *Information Systems Research* (24:3), pp. 613–631.
- Ghose, A., Ipeirotis, P. G., & Li, B. 2014. 'Examining the Impact of Ranking on Consumer Behavior and Search Engine Revenue', *Management Science* (60:7), pp. 1632–1654.
- Gibbert, M., Ruigrok, W., & Wicki, B. 2008. 'What Passes as a Rigorous Case Study?', *Strategic Management Journal* (29:13), pp. 1465–1474.
- Glaser, B. G. 1965. 'The Constant Comparative Method of Qualitative Analysis', *Social Problems* (12:4), pp. 436–445.
- Glaser, B. G. 1992. *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis: Emergence Vs. Forcing*, Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. G. & Strauss, A. L. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*, Chicago, IL: Aldine Publishing Company.
- Grandy, G. 2010. 'Instrumental Case Study', in A. J. Mills, G. Durepos, & E. Wiebe (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Guba, E. G. and Lincoln, Y. S. 1994. 'Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research', in N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, London: Sage, pp. 105–117.
- Hallen, B. L. & Eisenhardt, K. M. 2012. 'Catalyzing Strategies and Efficient Tie Formation: How Entrepreneurial Firms Obtain Investment Ties', *Academy of Management Journal* (55:1), pp. 35–70.
- Harrison, S. H. & Rouse, E. D. 2015. 'An Inductive Study of Feedback Interactions over the Course of Creative Projects', *Academy of Management Journal* (58:2), pp. 375–404.
- Hitt, M. A., Beamish, P. W., Jackson, S. E., & Mathieu, J. E. 2007. 'Building Theoretical and Empirical Bridges across Levels: Multilevel Research in Management', *Academy of Management Journal* (50:6), pp. 1385–1399.
- Holton, J. A. & Walsh, I. 2016. *Classic Grounded Theory: Applications with Qualitative and Quantitative Data*, Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Jarvenpaa, S. L. & Leidner, D. E. 1998. 'An Information Company in Mexico: Extending the Resource-Based View of the Firm to a Developing Country Context', *Information Systems Research* (9:4), pp. 342–361.
- Johns, G. 2006. 'The Essential Impact of Context on Organizational Behavior', *Academy of Management Review* (31:2), pp. 386–408.
- Joseph, J. & Ocasio, W. 2012. 'Architecture, Attention, and Adaptation in the Multibusiness Firm: General Electric from 1951 to 2001', *Strategic Management Journal* (33:6), pp. 633–660.
- Kane, G. C., Johnson, J. & Majchrzak, A. 2014. 'Emergent Life Cycle: The Tension Between Knowledge Change and Knowledge Retention in Open Online Coproduction Communities', *Management Science* (60:12), pp. 3026–3048.
- Koh, C., Ang, S., & Straub, D. W. 2004. 'IT Outsourcing Success: A Psychological Contract Perspective', *Information Systems Research* (15:4), pp. 356–373.
- Kuek, S. C., Paradi-Guilford, C., Fayomi, T., Imaizumi, S., Ipeirotis, P., Pina, P., & Singh, M. 2015. 'The Global Opportunity in Online Outsourcing', *The World Bank* (<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/22284>), accessed on 9 September, 2017.
- Kuhn, T. S. 1996. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Lacity, M. C., Willcocks, L. P., & Feeny, D. F. 1995. 'IT Outsourcing: Maximize Flexibility and Control', *Harvard Business Review* (73:3), pp. 84–93.
- Lawrence, T. B. & Dover, G. 2015. 'Place and Institutional Work: Creating Housing for the Hard-to-house', *Administrative Science Quarterly* (60:3), pp. 371–410.
- Lee, A. 1991. 'Integrating Positivist and Interpretivist Approaches to Organizational Research', *Organization Science* (2:4), pp. 342–365.
- Levina, N. & Ross, J. 2003. 'From the Vendor's Perspective: Exploring the Value Proposition in IT Outsourcing', *MIS Quarterly* (27:3), pp. 331–364.
- Levina, N. & Su, N. 2008. 'Global Multisourcing Strategy: The Emergence of a Supplier Portfolio in Services Offshoring', *Decision Sciences* (39:3), pp. 541–570.
- Lifshitz-Assaf, H. forthcoming. 'Dismantling Knowledge Boundaries at NASA: From Problem Solvers to Solution Seekers', *Administrative Science Quarterly*.
- McNamara, G. & Bromiley, P. 1997. 'Decision Making in an Organizational Setting: Cognitive and Organizational Influences on Risk Assessment in Commercial Lending', *Academy of Management Journal* (40:5), pp. 1063–1088.
- Manyika, J., Bughin, J., Lund, S., Nottebohm, O., Poulter, D., Jauch, S., & Ramaswamy, S. 2014. 'Global Flows in a Digital Age', *McKinsey Global Institute*. Available at www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/global-flows-in-a-digital-age (accessed on 19 September, 2017).
- Manyika, J., Chui, M., Brown, B., Bughin, J., Dobbs, R., Roxburgh, C., & Byers, A. H. 2011. 'Big Data: The Next Frontier for Innovation, Competition, and Productivity', *McKinsey Global Institute*. Available at www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/digital-mckinsey/our-insights/big-data-the-next-frontier-for-innovation (accessed on 19 September, 2017).
- Martens, D., Provost, F., Clark, J. & Junqué de Fortuny, E. 2016. 'Mining Massive Fine-Grained Behavior Data to Improve Predictive

- Analytics', *MIS Quarterly* (40:4), pp. 869–888.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. 1994. *Qualitative Data Analysis*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mingers, J. 2001. 'Combining IS Research Methods: Towards a Pluralist Methodology', *Information Systems Research* (12:3), pp. 240–259.
- Mintzberg, H. 1978. 'Patterns in Strategy Formation', *Management Science* (24:9), pp. 934–948.
- Mintzberg, H. 1979. 'An Emerging Strategy of "Direct" Research', *Administrative Science Quarterly* (24:4), pp. 582–589.
- Mintzberg, H. & McHugh, A. 1985. 'Strategy Formation in an Adhocracy', *Administrative Science Quarterly* (30:2), pp. 160–197.
- Mirabeau, L. & Maguire, S. 2014. 'From Autonomous Strategic Behavior to Emergent Strategy', *Strategic Management Journal* (35:8), pp. 1202–1229.
- Molinsky, A. L. 2013. 'The Psychological Processes of Cultural Retooling', *Academy of Management Journal* (56:3), pp. 683–710.
- Orlikowski, W. J. 2002. 'Knowing in Practice: Enacting a Collective Capability in Distributed Organizing', *Organization Science* (13:3), pp. 249–273.
- Orlikowski, W. J. & Baroudi, J. J. 1991. 'Studying Information Technology in Organizations: Research Approaches and Assumptions', *Information Systems Research* (2:1), pp. 1–28.
- Orr, R. J. & Scott, W. R. 2008. 'Institutional Exceptions on Global Projects: A Process Model', *Journal of International Business Studies* (39:4), pp. 562–588.
- Pagell, M., Johnston, D., Veltri, A., Klassen, R., & Biehl, M. 2014. 'Is Safe Production an Oxymoron?', *Production and Operations Management* (23:7), pp. 1161–1175.
- Panniello, U., Gorgoglione, M., & Tuzhilin, A. 2016. 'In CARSS We Trust: How Context-Aware Recommendations Affect Customers' Trust and Other Business Performance Measures of Recommender Systems', *Information Systems Research* (27:1), pp. 182–196.
- Patton, M. Q. 2001. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (2nd edition), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Peters, T. J. & Waterman, R. H. 1982. *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-run Companies*, New York: Harper & Row.
- Rynes, S. & Gephart Jr., R. P. 2004. 'From the Editors: Qualitative Research and the "Academy of Management Journal"', *Academy of Management Journal* (47:4), pp. 454–462.
- Siggelkow, N. 2007. 'Persuasion with Case Studies', *Academy of Management Journal* (50:1), pp. 20–24.
- Stake, R. E. 1978. 'The Case Study Method in Social Inquiry', *Educational Researcher* (7:2), pp. 5–8.
- Stake, R. E. 1995. *The Art of Case Study Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stake, R. E. 2005. 'Qualitative Case studies', in N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd edition), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 443–466.
- Strauss, A. L. 1987. *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Strauss, A. L. & Corbin, J. M. 1990. *Basics of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Strauss, A. L. & Corbin, J. M. 1998. *Basics of Qualitative Research* (2nd edition), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Su, N. 2011. 'Emergence of Cloud Computing: An Institutional Innovation Perspective', in *Proceedings of the 31st International Conference on Information Systems*, St Louis, MO, Paper 11.
- Su, N. 2013. 'Internationalization Strategies of Chinese IT Service Suppliers', *MIS Quarterly*, (37:1), pp. 175–200.
- Su, N. 2015. 'Cultural Sensemaking in Offshore Information Technology Service Suppliers: A Cultural Frame Perspective', *MIS Quarterly* (39:4), pp. 959–983.
- Su, N., Levina, N., & Ross, J. 2016. 'The Long-Tail Strategy for IT Outsourcing', *MIT Sloan Management Review* (57:2), pp. 81–89.
- Su, N. & Pirani, N. 2013. 'Emergence of 3D Printed Fashion: Navigating the Ambiguity of Materiality Through Collective Design', in *Proceedings of the 34th International Conference on Information Systems*, Milan, Italy.
- Sundararajan, A., Provost, F., Oestreicher-Singer, G., & Aral, S. 2013. 'Information in Digital, Economic, and Social Networks', *Information Systems Research* (24:4), pp. 883–905.

- The Economist*. 2015. 'Back to Business', *The Economist*. Available at www.economist.com/news/special-report/21663327-despite-chinas-recent-troubles-prospects-its-entrepreneurial-private-sector (accessed on 9 September, 2017).
- Vaivio, J. 2008. 'Qualitative Management Accounting Research: Rationale, Pitfalls and Potential', *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management* (5:1), pp. 64–86.
- Van Maanen, J. 1979. 'Reclaiming Qualitative Methods for Organizational Research: A Preface', *Administrative Science Quarterly* (24), pp. 520–526.
- Walsh, I., Holton, J. A., Bailyn, L., Fernandez, W., Levina, N., & Glaser, B. 2015. 'Rejoinder: Moving the Management Field Forward', *Organizational Research Methods* (18:4), pp. 620–628.
- Welch, C., Piekkari, R., Plakoyiannaki, E., & Paavilainen-Mäntymäki, E. 2011. 'Theorising From Case Studies: Towards a Pluralist Future for International Business Research', *Journal of International Business Studies* (42), pp. 740–762.
- Yin, R. K. 1981a. 'The Case Study as a Serious Research Strategy', *Knowledge: Creation, Diffusion, Utilization* (3), pp. 97–114.
- Yin, R. K. 1981b. 'The Case Study Crisis: Some Answers', *Administrative Science Quarterly* (26:1), pp. 58–65.
- Yin, R. K. 1984. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (1st edition), Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Yin, R. K. 2003. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (3rd edition), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yin, R. K. 2014. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (5th edition), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Qualitative Research as Interpretive Social Science

Robert P. Gephart, Jr.

Qualitative research has recently become so prominent (Gephart, 2004) that it is 'taking over the social sciences and related professional fields' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. ix). Yet some scholars have questioned the viability of a scientific approach to non-positivist qualitative research. For example, 'when the interpretive perspective of science is adopted ... the generally accepted standards and practices for writing and assessing the convincingness of this work become increasingly difficult to apply' (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993, p. 595). This argument shifts the focus from the integrity of research methods used to produce knowledge to a concern with the convincingness of the text to readers. More strongly, 'once researchers drop the notion that organization studies need to model reality and search for essentialist underlying structures via scientific study, they can embrace a more diverse and interpretive approach' (Wicks & Freeman, 1998, p. 130).

Indeed, the term 'science' is absent in titles, keywords and abstracts in the journal *Qualitative Research on Organizations and Management*. And the journal *Organization Science* provides no explicit discussion of qualitative organization science despite frequent qualitative papers published in its pages. This evidence suggests that qualitative organizational scholars today are more concerned with producing humanistic, literary, political and idiosyncratic knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. x) than with producing verifiable scientific knowledge of organizations (following Schutz, 1973b, p. 53). This unfortunate situation has emerged in organizational research despite the long-standing interest in producing trustworthy, meaningful and evidence-based knowledge of organizations that is useful in practice. The lack of concern with advancing a non-positivist scientific approach to organizational research may be limiting the social value, credibility and influence of the field.

There is an alternative. Over 60 years ago the philosopher and sociologist Alfred Schutz (1973) contributed a methodology for interpretive social science that inspired many important ideas used in organizational research, including sensemaking (Garfinkel, 1967; Weick, 1995), structuration theory (Giddens, 1976; Barley, 1986) and ‘abductive reasoning’ (Blaikie, 1993; Dunne and Dougherty, 2016). The goal of this chapter is to further develop Schutz’s approach to qualitative research as an interpretive social science (Blaikie, 1993, p. 42) that can develop into an influential field that provides verifiable and meaningful knowledge of organizations.

I approach this task by addressing research within the ‘interpretive paradigm’ of social science (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Hassard, 1993; Gephart, 2004, 2013). The chapter addresses the following questions: (1) what is interpretive, qualitative science? (2) how does interpretive qualitative science differ from other approaches to qualitative research? (3) how can scholars use qualitative methods to produce interpretive social science? and (4) why does organizational research need a scientific approach to interpretive research?

To do answer these questions, the chapter first explores the philosophical and sociological foundations of interpretive social science (Schutz, 1967, 1973a, b); Garfinkel, 1967). The next section on ‘Qualitative research and scientific knowledge’ explains what qualitative interpretive social science is and how it differs from other qualitative approaches and, particularly, from qualitative positivism. The section on ‘Elements of an interpretive science of organizations’ elaborates a method for interpretive social science and demonstrates further how it differs from other approaches to qualitative research. The qualitative methods that can be used to produce interpretive social science are then presented in the context of Schutz’s model of interpretive social science. The chapter also provides examples of organizational research to illustrate interpretive social science concerns, methods and

contributions, and to demonstrate why organizational research needs a qualitative, interpretive and scientific approach. The broader value of interpretive social science, why it is needed in organizational research, and future challenges and directions are addressed in the conclusion.

Qualitative Research and Scientific Knowledge

Qualitative organizational research is a multi-method process that uses ‘qualitative data’, including linguistic symbols and stories, verbal communication and written texts to understand organizational processes. It produces rich descriptions of naturally occurring behaviour in real life organizations as well as concepts and theories for understanding organizational realities (Gephart, 2004 and 2013). Of the four ‘paradigms’ of qualitative research (positivist, interpretive, critical and postmodern; Gephart, 2004, 2013; Hassard, 1993), only qualitative positivism and the scientific streams of interpretivism aspire and claim to produce scientific knowledge research.

Qualitative positivism (Gephart, 2004, 2013) uses a natural science approach that substitutes qualitative methods and data for quantitative methods and data. Positivism assumes that science can mirror reality, and, through reliable and valid methods similar to quantitative methods, it can uncover facts and determinant causal inter-relationships among variables (Gephart, 2013, p. 291). Qualitative positivism thus mimics quantitative positivism and has only limited concern with the meanings social phenomena have for social actors in everyday settings.

Interpretive science research is defined here as research that systematically constructs scientific theory and concepts (knowledge) as ‘second order’ interpretations based on inductive and abductive analysis of members’ actual common sense or ‘first order’ concepts and actions and meanings. This

second order scientific theory is verifiable, reproducible, logical, holds practical meaning to lay actors and offers abstract, objective meaning to interpretive scientists.

There are important differences between interpretive social science and positivist social science. These differences arise from the fact that interpretive social science takes an insider view that privileges social actors' knowledge of social contexts and their commonsense meanings. It seeks to understand members' tacit knowledge, shared meanings and the informal norms everyday actors use to act in the world. Interpretive theory is built from, and refers back to, commonsense meanings. In contrast, positivist social science privileges an outsider view of culture and behaviour, imposes scientific meanings on observations of everyday behaviour and generally lacks concern for members' commonsense meanings and interpretations.

The interpretive social science approach focuses on description and understanding of 'the actual human interactions, meanings and processes that constitute real-life organizational settings' (Gephart, 2004, p. 455) and examines how commonsense meanings are created and used by members for practical purposes. Interpretive social science uses controlled inferences (Schutz, 1973b, p. 51), formal logic, induction, deduction, retrodution and abductive reasoning to interpret qualitative data (Blaikie, 1993).

The initial tasks for interpretive social science are to describe and understand the commonsense constructs and subjective interpretations of social actors, to 'explore the general principles' by which social actors organize their experiences and to develop a theoretical system composed of second-level scientific constructs that objectively describe, predict and explain social organizational behaviour (Schutz, 1973a, p. 34). Research is 'interpretive' when it starts from and returns to 'the subjective meaning of the actions of human beings from which all social reality originates' (Schutz, 1973b, p. 62). It is scientific when it produces theory

that can be tested and falsified, agrees with experience, explains commonsense concepts of nature, accepts a set of rules for scientific procedure that is valid for all empirical sciences and deals with the pre-given meaning of social reality (Schutz, 1973a, p. 49).

Other non-scientific approaches to qualitative research focus on subjective meanings and human meaning-making, but seek different kinds of understanding 'based on the varying ontological, and methodological beliefs' to which the researchers subscribe (Bhattacharya, 2008, p. 2). These approaches, including hermeneutics, emancipatory social theories, feminism, critical theories, queer theory and the sociologies of everyday life, are described in Bhattacharya (2008) and Douglas et al. (1980).

The interpretive social science research produces: 'historically situated tales' of what particular people do in particular places at certain times; 'reasoned interpretations' of what this conduct means for social actors (Van Maanan, 1998, p. xi-xii); theoretical frameworks of propositions and arguments describing determinant relations among scientific constructs; and 'empirically ascertainable' and verifiable relations among concepts (Schutz, 1973b, p. 65).

In the pages that follow, I develop this conception of interpretive social science further and provide examples of organizational research that display features of this approach to science.

Natural Science and Social Science

A long-standing debate exists concerning the proper methodology for social science (Schutz, 1973a). One view assumes a basic difference between the structure of nature and the structure of the social world that necessitates distinct methods for natural and social science. A second view examines human behaviour in the same way that natural scientists look at nature. It assumes that only the methods of natural science can

establish reliable knowledge (Schutz, 1973a). Schutz (1973a, b) offers a third view and middle ground. He argues that the phenomena social science examines have different structures than natural science phenomena because the observational field of social science has a pre-given structure, meaning and relevance for human beings living there. Social science needs to investigate exactly what the natural science methods extract – tacitly held beliefs of commonsense reasoning that produce and sustain our ability to distinguish and make sense of nature and all objects of culture (Schutz, 1973b, p. 58). By presupposing shared meanings, positivism solves the ‘fundamental problem of social science before scientific inquiry starts’ (Schutz, 1973b, p. 55). A more valid approach requires ‘particular devices foreign to the natural sciences’ (Schutz, 1973b, p. 58), so that theory can agree with commonsense experience – something all the sciences of human affairs have done.

Qualitative interpretive social science starts from the first order ‘constructs’ of commonsense reasoning and seeks to understand members’ subjective interpretations. It then creates second order scientific constructs from commonsense constructs. The scientific constructs are objective, ideal type theoretical constructs formed in accordance with procedural rules valid for all empirical sciences and that embody testable general hypotheses. Scientific constructs differ from the constructs of common sense, since they must be objective in the sense that propositions from them can be subjected to controlled verification and cannot refer to private, uncontrolled experience (p. 62). The interpretive science approach thus starts from the premise that commonsense knowledge is foundational to knowing the world. It accepts the application of natural science methods to second order social science concepts, but proposes additional devices foreign to natural science that can bridge commonsense and scientific concepts.

ELEMENTS OF AN INTERPRETIVE SCIENCE OF ORGANIZATIONS

Weber’s (1978) *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* describes an organizational ‘science concerning itself with the interpretive science of social action and thereby a causal explanation of its course and consequences’ (Weber, 1978, p. 4). Weber was concerned to scientifically understand the ‘subjective meaning’ of phenomena, which he conceives as understanding that is ‘subjective’ because its goal is to understand what the other actor ‘means’ in an action, in contrast to what an observer might impute. Subjective meaning can be shared and it is not introspection or the private affair of an actor. It can also be controlled in common sense. Also, predictions based on subjective meanings are usually made in common-sense thinking with great success. Hence, we can predict that a letter addressed to a specific individual will reach the addressee, and it generally does. Thus, subjective understanding refers to what the actor ‘means’ by an action in meanings that can be shared with other actors.

Schutz’s (1973a, 1973b) aim was to put Weber’s interpretive sociology on a firmer grounding. To do so he provided a methodology of ideal types for understanding social action (Blaikie, 1993, p. 42). This is premised on the idea that commonsense knowledge is foundational to knowing the world and is based on a system of constructs that register the typicality of the world in a shared (intersubjective) manner. The bridge between common sense and scientific meaning is the methodology of social types that involves social actors’ uses of typifications of both persons and courses of action (Blaikie, 1993, p. 43). Schutz (1973a) notes that actors engage in ‘typification’ during commonsense reasoning. Any actual perception of an object is transferred to similar objects that are thereafter viewed as ‘the same type’ of object. The typicality of the world lies in the shared world of meaning

that existed before us and that is experienced using a stock of knowledge of typical objects (Schutz, 1973a, pp. 6–8). We need to interpret this commonsense world in order to act in the world (Schutz, 1973a, p. 10).

Schutz gives primacy to commonsense knowledge with his well-known postulate of subjective interpretation (p. 11): to understand what an action means, one must understand the meaning the action has for the actor. One cannot understand an institution or organization without understanding what it means to individuals who orient their behaviour towards it. Thus, the world is not 'my private world' (p. 11) because one's knowledge of it is from the outset intersubjective and socialized.

Three assumptions are needed for actors to produce shared meanings. First, social actors must assume that people in a common setting will see and recognize common objects of the world even if their backgrounds, purposes and the systems of relevance they use to interpret objects and events differ (Schutz, 1973a, p. 11). Second, actors must assume that an inter-changeability of standpoints exists such that members could change places and see what the other sees (pp. 11–12). Third, actors must assume a congruency of systems of relevance, whereby any differences in perspectives that originate in biographies are irrelevant and hence actors can see objects in an identical manner (p. 12). These common assumptions allow members to develop the sense that the objects of shared meaning are objective and detached from each actor's unique definition of the situation, biographical circumstances and purposes at hand, and thus supersede the thought objects of peoples' private experience (p. 12).

Central to Schutz's ideal type method is the premise that people make sense of others and the social world by creating constructs of typical social relationships and motives. Most relationships are constituted by distant persons and can be grasped only by forming a construct of a typical way of behaviour with a typical pattern of underling

motives and attitudes, where the other and their conduct are just instances or exemplars of the broader type. Course of action types are idealized typifications of actions, projects and motives that social actors had in the past and will display or enact in the future. Action types sustain ongoing social interaction. They include future-oriented, 'in-order-to' motives (p. 21) that describe the goals and motives another person seeks in choosing an action and past-oriented, 'because motives' (p. 22) that explain after the fact why someone acted. Schutz (1973a, p. 28) was primarily concerned with types of 'rational action' that presuppose rational consideration of the alternative means to an end; clear insight into these ends, means and alternatives; and determination of their importance. Other forms of action can be analysed as departures from this rational model.

Schutz (1973a, p. 34) clearly emphasized that social science requires description and analysis of the subjective point of view – the interpretations of action and settings made by the actors involved. He validates this argument by addressing two questions (1973a, pp. 34–6). First, how is it possible to grasp subjective meaning scientifically? This involves replacing the objects of common sense related to unique events with a model of the social world in which typified events relevant to the social scientific problem occur. Then one constructs a model of the typical interaction (e.g. a salesman selling an auto) and analyses the typical meaning the interaction might have for the types of actors who originate the interaction.

Second, how is it possible to grasp subjective meaning structures using a system of objective knowledge? First, one needs to develop methodological devices for obtaining objective and verifiable knowledge of subjective meaning structures that allow for discovery via controlled inference (Schutz, 1973a). The knowledge must be possible to state in propositional form and capable of verification by observation (pp. 51–2). Second, the scientific attitude must guide objective consideration of

subjective knowledge. This involves a disinterested observer who is detached from their biographical situation and who seeks truth in accordance with pre-established features of the scientific method and pre-existing knowledge of the scientific field involved. The 'scientific problem' then determines what is relevant to the solution, to data, and to abstractions and generalizations that emerge. The relevancies of scientific inquiry are determined solely by the scientific attitude. Observations must also be interpreted in terms of their subjective meaning for actors. (p. 40).

Schutz (1973b, pp. 63–4) provided a detailed description of the interpretive social science method. Table 3.1 summarizes Schutz's work (1973a, 1973b, 1967) and incorporates common steps in interpretive qualitative research (Gephart, 2004, 2013). This framework is general because Schutz focused on establishing

philosophical foundations for an interpretive social science. Thus, he neglected methodological issues of how the actor's perspective is grasped, how interpretive social science models are to be tested and how theory originates in the experience of the scientist (Freeman, 1980, pp. 129–30).

The method begins with a first order description when a researcher observes the social world and describes members' commonsense constructs, methods and subjective meanings (steps 1–3). Next, (steps 4a and 4b) the researcher constructs typical course-of-action patterns that correspond to observed events (Schutz, 1973a, pp. 40–4 and pp. 63–4). These first order descriptions are coordinated to the 'personality type' (actor type) of the subject and this 'model of conscious action' is restricted to key elements of specific performances. Typical motives

Table 3.1 Framework for qualitative interpretive science research

LEVEL 1: COMMON SENSE CONCEPTS

1. Interpretive scientist gains access to everyday life site of actual social interaction of relevance to research and observes interaction as it naturally occurs in real life contexts.
2. Researcher uses field research and ethnographic methods including ethnographic interviews to develop thick and detailed written descriptions of actual interactions in real life context and records detailed descriptions of settings and conversations that occurred therein.
3. Researcher analyses data to discover members' concepts including key words, constructs and theories that explain the subjective meaning of everyday life settings and actions and develops first order descriptions of interactions and settings from actors' point(s) of view.

LEVEL 2: CONCEPTS OF CONCEPTS OF SOCIAL ACTORS: SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

4. Researcher reviews and analyses (interprets) concepts and theories in members' accounts from a distant or disinterested (scientific) perspective to induce via abstraction second order concepts, i.e. concepts of concepts of social actors that show patterns in first order descriptions of actors.
 - a. Researcher constructs ideal type models of social roles or positions of people participating in interaction in focal settings to analytically describe the interaction
 - b. Ideal type models are refined to include course-of-action models and motives ascribing typical notions, purposes and goals to ideal type models of actors in specified but general social positions
 - c. Constructed second order models are refined to insure they 1) capture and preserve (make recoverable) subjective meanings of members, 2) are logically consistent and 3) present human action in a manner understandable to everyday actors
 5. Researcher varies features of models to understand how variations in models lead (hypothetically) to variations in outputs or outcomes of interaction.
 6. Researcher examines data (prior data or new data) to ascertain if patterns of meaning and interaction provided in adduced theory are consistent with actual behaviours and interactions in real life settings that represent key aspects of ideal type models.
 7. Researcher relates or compares actors' and social scientific descriptions of behaviour and interaction to existing and newly created (inductively and abductively constructed) second order concepts and theories to refine or contest prior and new theories and concepts.
 8. Researcher formulates narratives, logically consistent and testable propositions or hypotheses that summarize via empirical generalization the findings and insights from first order and second order analyses.
-

are ascribed to the actor who is placed in the situation of interest. The analyst begins the second level analysis by creating constructs or models of actors in the form of ‘homunculi’ with prescribed in-order-to and because motives. The construction of these models is a central practice in interpretive social science and can be done using one or more of the commonly used qualitative analysis methods presented in Table 3.2. Table 3.2 highlights the uses of the methods for organizational science, cites empirical research using the methods and provides basic methodological references on how to undertake the methods.

The table presents commonly used strategies for interpretive social science research including ethnography and grounded theorizing. These well-developed strategies describe and then interpret members’ actual behaviours and first order meanings, the strategies are based on interpretive science ideas and the strategies offer congenial approaches to doing interpretive social science. But they are not necessarily the ‘best’ or only ways to do interpretive social science.

Once first and second order models are developed, the researcher confirms that the models are not arbitrary (step 4c). They must be constructed so that a human act performed in the real world by an actor, as indicated by the typical construct, would be understandable

in commonsense terms to that actor and others (Schutz, 1973b, p. 64). This insures compatibility with the constructs of everyday life. Models of social action must also be clear, distinct and fully compatible with principles of formal logic to make the models objectively valid (Schutz, 1973b, p. 64). The researcher also needs to ensure consistency between commonsense and scientific concepts.

Thereafter, one can vary the circumstances within which the model operates. For example, one can compare a model of a producer acting under unregulated competition with one acting under cartel restrictions and assess the output of each model. This allows the researcher to understand the different factors that explain empirical regularities (p. 65) and can be used to produce interpretive social science theory (steps 5–8).

This scientific analysis process was later labelled ‘abduction’: ‘the process used to produce social scientific accounts of social life by drawing on the concepts and meanings used by social actors, and the activities in which they engage’ (Blaikie, 1993, p. 176). Abduction is the analytical process that moves from lay descriptions of social life to technical descriptions of social life. Schutz never used the term abduction. But his extension of Weber’s (1978) ideal type methodology was important to the development of the

LEVEL 1:

Everyday common sense terms

↓

Bases for social actions and interactions

↓

Social actors’ accounts

↓

LEVEL 2:

Social scientific descriptions

↓

Social theories generated OR

↓

Conceptual understandings in terms of social theories or perspectives

Figure 3.1 The multiple layers of the abductive process

Source: Adapted from Blaikie (1993) p. 177

Table 3.2 Qualitative research strategies and methods of analysis for interpretive social science

<i>Application</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Interpretive Science Uses</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Reference Sources</i>
Case Study Strategy	Detailed description of phenomenon and how it changed over time	Describe first order meanings Develop second order concepts Validate, elaborate or test theory	Orlikowski (1996) study of situated change at a software firm	Mills, Duerpos & Wiebe (2009)
Ethnographic Strategy	Insider description of a culture or micro-culture developed through participation in the culture	Produce rich and meaningful descriptions of actual organizational behaviour and first order meanings	Weeks (2004) study of the culture of complaints at a British bank.	Agar, M. 1980
Grounded Theory Strategy And Methods of Analysis	Inductive construction of theory from systematically obtained and analysed data	Identification of members' first order meanings using <i>in vivo</i> coding	Perlow (1997) study of work practices and time management of software engineers	Glaser & Strauss (1967) Locke (2002)
		Constant comparative analysis of theoretically sampled categories of data to develop second order concepts		Walsh, Holton, Bailyn, Fernandez, Levina & Glaser (2015)
Expansion Analysis Method	Line by line, data-driven interpretation of a text or transcript	Shows how background knowledge, sensemaking practices and first and second order concepts operate in text	Gephart, Topal & Zhang (2010) study of temporal sensemaking in a public hearing	Cicourel, 1980
Ethno-semantic Analysis Method	Structured approach to inductive discovery of folk terms and categories in ethnographic interviews and data	Identification and verification of first order concepts and their cultural meaning to members Construction of folk taxonomies	Boehlke (2005) ethnography of how tattoo parlour recruited customers	Spradley (1979) McCurdy, Spradley & Shandy (2005)
Interpretive Textual Analysis Method	Strategy for undertaking computer supported textual analysis	Identify first order meanings Develop second order concepts Statistically test and verify patterns identified through qualitative data analysis	Gephart (1997)	Kelle (1995)

'abductive' research strategy in social science (Blaikie, 1993, pp. 176 and 178). The overview of the abductive research strategy in Figure 3.1 highlights the multiple layers involved (Blaikie, 1993, p. 177).

The abductive strategy connects first level and second level constructs to integrate common sense, scientific knowledge and form theory in interpretive social science. For some interpretive scientists, reporting social actors' accounts is all that can or needs to be done to understand social life (Blaikie, 1993, p. 177). Others turn these accounts into descriptions of social life tied closely to actors' natural language. Still others 'will generate abstract descriptions, or even theories, from the descriptions produced from actors' accounts' (Blaikie, 1993, p. 177). But Schutz's abductive process is central to interpretive social science.

A key task for interpretive social science is to uncover the tacit mutual knowledge, symbolic meanings, intentions and rules that orient actors in the everyday world, and to avoid imposing an outsider view – as is done by positivist methods. This is difficult in many situations because much everyday activity is routine and carried out in an unreflective attitude. But when social life is disrupted or people are challenged to explain their behaviour, actors are forced to undertake sensemaking (Garfinkel, 1964, 1967) to reflectively search for and construct meanings (Blaikie, 1993, p. 177). Ethnomethodologists have developed 'breaching' procedures to force actors to engage in sensemaking, which makes their tacit meanings and theories explicit (see 'Ethnomethodology, sensemaking and interpretive practices' below). These 'breaching' procedures add a new methodological tool that allows interpretive social science to test and validate hypotheses about the nature of interpretive practices.

Ethnomethodology, Sensemaking and Interpretive Practices

Ethnomethodology is 'the science of sense-making' (Heap, 1976) that investigates

members' (ethno) methods for constructing and sustaining a sense of shared social meaning and order (Garfinkel, 1967). It does this by analysing the everyday methods people use to accomplish practical tasks (Coulon, 1995, p. 2). Ethnomethodology is not 'an "alternative" methodology' or theory (Turner, 1974, pp. 7 and 11). It is a proto-science (Lynch, 1993) concerned with understanding the taken-for-granted foundations of social order and how activity accomplishes a sense of the external world (Mehan & Wood, 1975, p. 5).

Ethnomethodology, originated by Garfinkel, builds on Schutz's phenomenology to specify 'elemental' interpretive processes that inform all attributions of meaning or sensibility (Freeman, 1980, p. 139). Garfinkel went beyond Schutz's focus on 'normal' or 'stable' social interaction: 'Procedurally, it is my preference to start with familiar scenes and ask what can be done to make trouble' (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 37). He thus created 'breaching' experiments that were designed:

to multiply the senseless features of perceived environments; to produce and sustain bewilderment, consternation and confusion; to produce ... anxiety, shame, guilt and indignation; and to produce disorganized interaction (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 38).

These experiments were used to test (and confirm) the necessity of using interpretive practices to produce and sustain normal social interaction. A well-known breaching experiment is Garfinkel's 'pre-medical student' experiment (1967, pp. 57–64), designed to systematically breach all the essential commonsense expectancies Schutz (1973a & b) identified and to create confusion for subjects in an interview situation.

In the experiment, Garfinkel (1967) posed as a 'medical school representative' and ran 28 pre-medical students individually through a three-hour interview to 'learn why the medical student in-take interview was such a stressful situation' (p. 58). After the first hour of the interview, Garfinkel played a recording of an 'actual' interview for each subject. The recording was a faked interview,

'the applicant was a boor, his language was ungrammatical, he was evasive, contradicted the interviewer' and bragged. The subjects were then asked to assess the recorded interview. Each subject was given contrived information from the applicant's (fake) 'official record' (1967, p. 59) that contradicted the principle points in the subject's assessment of the applicant. For example, if the subject said that the applicant was from the lower class, the subject was told that the applicant's father was a senior executive of a major firm. Student subjects were told that the applicant was admitted and doing well; that six psychiatrists had strongly recommended the applicant be admitted based on fitness for medicine; and that most students who had heard the recording agreed as well.

Most of the student subjects (25 of 28) were 'taken in' by the deception. They became anxious and bewildered, then tried to resolve the 'incongruities of performance data with vigorous attempts to make it factually compatible with their original and very derogatory assessments' (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 60). Seven of the 25 subjects were unable to resolve the incongruity of their views: 'their suffering was dramatic and unrelieved' (p. 63). Three students assumed there had been a deception and dismissed the incongruence. Twenty-two of the 28 subjects expressed 'marked relief – ten of them with explosive expressions – when the deception was disclosed' (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 64). Thus Garfinkel (1967) was able to demonstrate the importance that interpretive practices have for shared meaning and social order by systematically breaching the commonsense expectancies fundamental to social order.

Garfinkel used the results to criticize conventional positivist sociologies that treat commonsense interpretive practices as 'epiphenomenal'. Positivists incorrectly conceive of members of society as cultural or psychological 'dopes', who produce stable features of society by acting out pre-established scripts or by acting on the basis of their psychological biography and conditioning. Garfinkel's research (1967, p. 36)

empirically validated Schutz's (1973) insights, confirmed the importance of commonsense interpretive practices as foundations of social interaction, and related commonsense meanings and sensemaking to dimensions of social organization. He also provided strong evidence that social researchers should treat social settings as emergent situations, where social actors necessarily invent rational properties and interpretive procedures to deal with unfolding contingencies of situations.

Egon Bittner, a student of Garfinkel, extended ethnomethodology to address organization theory (Bittner, 1974). He argued (p. 70) that traditional sociology seeks to understand how well the intended formal structures of organization describe what is going on in organizations. The concept of 'informal organization' was developed in sociology to account for situations where formal structures did not provide for certain aspects of organization; for example, workers who routinely ignore a no smoking policy. Philip Selznik (1948) had pointed out that informal features of organization are needed to adapt to the impact of functional imperatives, but he failed to consider what the formal structures mean to lay actors and how they are used by them on a day-to-day basis (Bittner, 1974, p. 71). Bittner (1974) thus argued for the re-specification of the concept of organization, from the outsider conception of positivists to an interpretive conception of insiders' meanings. This could be done by using the postulate of subjective meaning to study how actors' terms and meanings are assigned to real objects and events in real scenes of interaction (Bittner, 1974, p. 75). This re-specification has been started (Gephart, 1978, 1993), but is an important and incomplete task for the future of interpretive social science.

CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES OF INTERPRETIVE SOCIAL SCIENCE

The ideas above provide foundations for an interpretive social science of organizations.

And Garfinkel's (1967) breaching experiments show how ethnomethodology has developed a means to create and verify objective concepts of subjective meanings in ways that are 'intendedly replicable and the frameworks can be extended through empirical research' (Turner, 1974, p. 11). This section describes four examples of organizational research undertaken in a manner consistent with interpretive social science methods. I selected these studies to illustrate the methods, practices and findings of interpretive social science. Each study displays only parts of the interpretive social science model, but collectively they display all of the features.

Organizational Socialization

Van Maanen (1973) undertook an ethnographic study of police in their naturally occurring occupational settings to explore the relatively unexamined process of socialization into a police organization. Most previous information on police socialization came from questionnaire-survey research that addressed police attitudes. Van Maanen used a dramaturgical approach (Van Maanen, 1973, p. 408; Goffman, 1959) to conceptualize police and recruits as actors performing both 'on stage' and 'back stage'. He focused on the individual recruit's entry into the police organization, a point when the organization 'may be thought to be most persuasive, for the person has few guidelines to direct his behavior ... and is more readily influenced' than later in their organizational career (Van Maanen, 1973, pp. 408–9).

Van Maanen's entry to the field required a lengthy search for a police department that would permit him to complete police training and do police work as an ethnographer (Van Maanen, 1981). The study lasted for nine months. Three months were spent as 'a fully participating member of one Union City Police Academy recruit class', followed by four months as a back-seat observer in patrol units (Van Maanen, 1973,

p. 409). Van Maanen took extensive field notes, collected tales, and sought to learn the local culture of police from the inside: 'Only by entering into the webs of local associations does a fieldworker begin to glimpse the distinctive nature of what lies within and without these webs' (Van Maanen, 1981, p. 14). Most of his time was spent with a few squad members who became his key informants (p. 15). After training, he learned the symbols of membership in police culture: 'on my body, I still carried a badge and a gun', and 'dressed for the street as I thought a plainclothes officer might' (p. 15). He also learned informal police practices, including how to please the station sergeant to get favourable job assignments and the folk theories police have regarding police work. During his time with the police, 'They allowed me to watch what they did and I let them do it' (p. 17). He thus gained an insider's view of the subjective meanings of police work and yet kept a disinterested perspective on police and himself: 'I have tried to come as close to police as possible without being one of them and to stand as far away from the police as I could without leaving the planet' (1981, p. 17).

Van Maanen (1981) faced the tasks of writing ethnography and producing scientific knowledge once the fieldwork ended. To end fieldwork 'is to distance one's self from the people studied' (1981, p. 18). 'At the point of their departure, I suspect most fieldworkers begin to seriously question their data base and express some grave reservations as to both its quantity and quality' (Van Maanen, 1981, p. 18). Faced with the challenge of 'putting together and writing up what I have discovered in the field' (p. 21) he developed two analytic goals to order his materials: (1) 'presenting the linguistic and conceptual categories used by the police to think about and express themselves' (p. 21); and (2) attempting to 'present the patterns of action relevant to given cognitive categories' (p. 21) to describe the social organization of police activities.

Using data at hand and the first order concepts and theories of police, Van Maanen developed a second order, ideal type model of four 'analytically distinct' stages in police recruit initiation: choice, introduction, encounter and metamorphosis (Van Maanen, 1973, p. 409). These stages describe the experiences and interactions of members, but extend beyond first order meanings to include typical motives and goals of common member statuses and analytical goals, including construction of a model of police socialization as it unfolds over time. The model is constructed to capture members' subjective meanings and Van Maanen (1973, 1981) keeps his 'theory' close to the everyday contexts and constructs studied. This study is an excellent example of interpretive social science research using abduction to transform actors' first level accounts into higher-order descriptions of social life tied closely to actors' natural language (Blaikie, 1993, p. 177).

Organizations and Status Transformation

Gephart (1978) undertook an auto-ethnographic study of how a researcher, in the role of organization leader, created and operated a university graduate students' centre (GSC). The research process involved participation in GSC activities, recording field notes on conversations and activities during one year of participant observation research, and analysis of organizational documents. The research eventually focused on the unexpected occurrence of a 'status degradation' ceremony: a meeting where 'the public identity of an actor is transformed into something lower in the scheme of social types' (Garfinkel, 1956, p. 420). In this case, the leader was removed from the role of manager of the centre and his status was transformed in a downward manner.

The research used second order ethnomethodological constructs concerning the concept

of organization (Bittner, 1974) and the process of status transformation and degradation (Garfinkel, 1956) to specify ideal type models of status degradation and the ideal type organizational schemes used to verbally construct organizations. The degradation case was then analysed using grounded theory practices (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) to describe, code and interpret patterns in the data. Analysis focused primarily on how members' constructions of the organization emerged, changed over time and were used in the degradation process. The core focus in the paper is a detailed transcript of the 'degradation work' that occurred at a committee meeting where the degradation process unfolded. A line-by-line interpretation of the discourse was prepared in order to understand how the interpretive concepts (Bittner, 1974; Garfinkel, 1956; Schutz, 1973a & b) explained the sensemaking that produced the degradation, including the practices involved in constructing enforceable schemes of organization warranting the degradation.

The research described the schemes of organization constructed by different groups at the meeting – degradation facilitators and resisters – and how these were developed and employed over time to interpret the leader's behaviour. Through this process, prior ideal type models of degradation and organization were validated by comparing the models to the observations. Then the model was refined into more elaborate second order concepts to reflect the insights from the specific study. In addition, a grounded theory model of the life history of a degradation process was developed from the data, using theoretical sampling and constant comparative analysis of different groups and second level organizational constructs.

The research confirmed the accuracy of prior conceptualizations of how meaning construction creates organization. It also provided insights into the higher-level construct of status degradation as one form of succession. This was done by connecting first order meanings to second order scientific concepts

and then generalizing to address the more abstract construct of incumbent succession in organizations. The research also provided testable propositions, models and a grounded theory of organizational succession built from the concepts of the concepts of social actors that could be evaluated (confirmed, disconfirmed or refined) in future research on other instances and forms of organizational succession.

The research was designed with Schutz's (1973a) framework in mind and reflects many features of the interpretive social science method. In particular, the data were coded and interpreted to discover members' concepts and theories and were used to develop a narrative of the development of the organization. Bittner's (1974) second order conceptualizations of models of organization and Garfinkel's (1956) ideal type process model of status degradation were compared to the data describing the observed processes. The research also used first order data to produce: (1) a grounded ideal type scheme of 'components of an organizational status degradation ceremony' (p. 569), (2) a schematic process model of the degradation process and (3) ideal type models of members' first order models of organizational reality.

For example, denouncers constructed the organization as a model of compliance (Bittner, 1974) by claiming that all rules demanded compliance, whereas defenders' construction was that rules were incomplete and could be disregarded or elaborated to meet contingencies. The models were shown to reflect the postulate of subjective meaning and the postulates of logical consistency and adequacy. Variations in the model emerged at different stages of the unfolding degradation – i.e. a series of prior, unsuccessful degradation attempts – that led to different outcomes for interaction. Previous sociological conceptions of organizational status degradation were shown to be useful in describing many features of the current degradation. The study findings showed the limits of past research on organizational succession and provided

additional new frameworks for understanding leader succession.

Technological Change

Barley (2015) supervised an ethnographic study to explore how technological change influences how work is done. Barley sought to describe and explain how sales encounters in the 'work system' of auto sales changed when the traditional face-to-face showroom sales approach was supplemented by the new 'online' (or Internet) approach, where customers used websites to research autos, select a dealer and negotiate pricing (pp. 37–8). Role theory and dramaturgical analysis, two interpretive frameworks, were used to understand 'how new technologies become entangled with the social', such that they reconfigured what Goffman (1983) called an 'interaction order: the situated, patterned and recurrent ways of interacting associated with a particular context' (Barley, 2015, p. 34). The argument is that technologies trigger change by altering the tasks workers perform and how they perform them (p. 32). The concept of roles is both a commonsense concept of actors and a second order, social science concept that connects subjective meanings of individuals with shared, commonsense meanings conceived collectively as 'ways of working together' (Barley, 2015, p. 34). Changes to roles change meanings and behaviour and thus change work systems.

Barley (2015, p. 35) also used a dramaturgical approach termed 'frame analysis' (Goffman, 1959, 1974) to highlight sense-making based on a 'definition of the situation'. A frame is defined as a general scheme of meaning that carries shared social meaning. Once people frame the situation, they can invoke the frame to interpret behaviour and can construct a 'line of action' to guide their behaviour. For example, framing certain places as auto show rooms both guides and limits the roles and appropriate behaviours in each setting. Participants use

their background knowledge to assemble a tacit 'script' – the plot of a recurrent activity that defines essential features of the parts or roles people play and establishes loosely prescribed expectations for behaviour in actors concerning how an interaction should go. When an encounter's dramaturgical elements change, scripts may change and if scripts change, the interaction order has, by definition, changed (Barley, 2015, p. 35). This approach to technological change shifts attention from technology to the system of actors, actions and interaction in which the technology is embedded.

Participant observation was undertaken in two California auto dealerships: a Chevrolet dealer and a Toyota dealer. The dealerships had separate sales staff for floor and Internet sales. The initial study focus was a comparison of different manufacturer-based sales cultures (Barley, 2015, p. 38). But initial data analysis found no important differences in dealerships. The researchers had also documented several Internet sales encounters that provided strong evidence of differences between floor and Internet sales that were consistent across the dealerships. For example, Internet sales encounters 'evinced little of the tension and animosity that often marked floor encounters' (p. 38) and the 'price seemed to be the first topic of conversation in Internet sales while it was usually the last topic of conversation during a floor encounter' (p. 38). The researchers then collected additional data comparing floor versus Internet sales encounters. Encounters were tape-recorded, transcribed and integrated with field notes.

A second analysis was then done to determine whether the presence of a technology had reconfigured the scripts, stage, props and moves the actors made in ways that sustained a different line of action (p. 36). The comparative analysis used Goffman's ideas as a guide to code (1) lines of action and (2) the major steps in the flow of the encounter, e.g. greeting a customer, taking a test drive. This produced a conception of the typical stages

of a floor versus an Internet sales encounter and constituted the encounter's script (p. 39). The researchers also noted two action types – 'sales moves' and 'customer moves' – that involved any talk or action the role players made to influence their role-others or shape how an encounter would unfold. 'Awkward moments', defined as interactions that disrupted turn taking or involved disrespectful behaviours, were also coded. A grounded theory analysis was done, based on actors' commonsense terms and interactions. This produced an ideal type second order model of the life history of each type of encounter (pp. 40–8) and general models of each action schema – sales moves, customer moves and awkward moments. Frequencies of occurrences of different types of moves and awkward moments were compared.

The analysis revealed that the floor sales encounter cast salesmen and customers as antagonistic negotiators (Barley, 2015, p. 48). Salesmen showed vehicles to customers and took them for a test drive before negotiating a price. Floor salesmen were prone to employing moves designed to pressure customers. In contrast, Internet salespersons assumed the role of price and information providers and customers assumed the role of price takers: the sales encounter resembled a common retail sales encounter (p. 48). Thus, the scripts of floor and Internet sales were inversely structured and the tenor of the floor sales was more tense and disputatious. Floor sales were considered by floor customers to be more stressful, contentious and threatening than were Internet sales encounters.

Internet sales customers found a more favourable experience than expected and felt more in control and less intimidated than expected (p. 50). Thus the Internet sales encounter 'transformed the work system in which cars are sold' (p. 51). It removed the encounter from face-to-face interaction, since it was only at the point of purchase that the customer and salesperson met. This re-scripted the sales encounter by removing the showroom stage from sales and substituting

telephone conversation for floor encounters. This re-configuration of the sales encounter 'changed the definition of the situation in ways that required salesmen and allowed customers to play their roles differently' (p. 51). The Internet sales encounter was no longer a negotiation, since the customer's information was gleaned outside the encounter and both salesmen and customers had similar and accurate information. Salesmen offered reasonable and competitive prices and had no need to pressure customers who arrived committed to buying a vehicle at the price quoted on the phone.

Barley's (2015) paper displays key features of the interpretive social science approach. Data collection involved observations of actual discourse between sales people and customers in these settings. Members' concepts and theories, as well as subjective meanings, were documented and a richly detailed first order description of auto sales was prepared. The study evolved when the initial hypothesis was not supported and a new hypothesis about technologically different sales methods was tested.

Ideal type models of the scripts and stages of the two types of sales encounter (floor and Internet) were constructed from first order coded data (pp. 40–8). The tenor of the encounters was confirmed by the talk and other behaviours constituting the actual 'moves' and 'awkward moments' of salespeople and customers. Analysis of these interaction segments provided insights into the different meanings the encounters had for participants in each encounter type. The detailed and repeated coding (p. 39) ensured members' meanings were captured and preserved. The concepts used to code data at the analytic level were comprehensible in commonsense terms and referred back to the first order constructs. The two models show how the varied scripts lead to different interactions and outcomes. Further, the data on moves and awkward moments reveal the 'in-order-to' and 'because' motives of salespersons and customers. Barley (2015, p. 49)

also provides data on the frequency of occurrences of moves and moments for each role that substantiates the inferences made about the differing social meanings of the encounters (Barley, 2015, p. 39, fn 13). Barley addresses the relevance of his approach to past and future research on technological change and confirms that Goffman's dramaturgical approach can be usefully applied to the study of the social meaning and implications of technology.

New Product Development

Dunne & Dougherty (2016) explore 'how innovators use abductive reasoning to create new products in the context of complexity' (p. 143). They define abduction as the 'the process of reasoning in which explanations are formed and evaluated' (Dunne & Dougherty, 2016, p. 135) and a 'style of research based on discovery and understanding, not prediction and testing' that is used to make sense of puzzling facts (p. 135). Abduction involves creating hypotheses based on mental models, making predictions and adjusting models to accommodate deviations from predictions then reframing problems.

The researchers conducted 85 interviews with scientists, technologists and managers doing scientific work developing new drugs. The goal was to understand how pharmaceutical and biotechnology company scientists formulated tentative hypotheses or models of the innovation process, evaluated them and reframed them. The interviews elicited accounts of how the scientists and co-workers conceived their work activities and provided 'people's stories of how they do their work of drug discovery' (p. 138). These accounts were used to discover the first order and intermediary models (p. 137) that development workers used to build better models of new drug development (Dunne & Dougherty, 2016). The researchers also describe their own 'cycles of abductive reasoning that

we used to figure out the role of abductive reasoning in complex innovation' (p. 137). Although Dunne & Dougherty's (2016) formal conception of abduction varies from Schutz's depiction (Schutz, 1973a & b; Blaikie, 1993), their research approach is similar to Schutz's description of the abductive process, where social scientists develop second order concepts and theories based on descriptions of first order everyday knowledge among lay actors.

The interview data provided the 'rationales and understandings of why things unfold as they do, rather than "objective" depictions of what they actually do' (Dunne & Dougherty, 2016, p. 139). The approach is suitable for interpretive social science because interviews can elicit members' conceptions and 'inside information' that guides their actions and can convey members' subjective meanings more directly than inferring these from observations where the researchers need to figure out what informants are doing and may impose their own interpretations on what is observed (McCurdy et al., 2005, p. 11). Also, 'the interviews comprise people's rationales for how they work and reflect their reasoning processes, which is what we build theory about' (Dunne & Dougherty, 2016, p. 139).

The analysis involved grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), itself 'a process of abductive reasoning' (Dunne & Dougherty, 2016, p. 137). Grounded theory is not necessarily interpretive, since its concepts do not need to be derived from lay language (Blaikie, 1993), but it can be used to create scientific concepts from members' concepts as Dunne & Dougherty (2016) did in building their theory from everyday language use.

The researchers sought first order categories that captured facts of data on new product development. One category was the use of clues to imaginatively conceive of a configuration of interactions 'between a drug possibility, a disease, and the human body' (p. 142). A second category was the content of what innovators were looking for – a plausible pattern of interactions among

product elements that might produce a new drug. The third category was a dynamic of 'elaborating' and 'narrowing' of options by focusing on one category of compounds rather than looking at diverse structures (Dunne & Dougherty, 2016, p. 139). The researchers used abductive reasoning as a label because it seemed to describe the processes they had observed (p. 142) better than other theories.

The final model involved three second order social mechanisms that enabled the use of abductive reasoning to create new products: (1) using clues, (2) elaborating and narrowing, and (3) iterating across disciplinary boundaries to reframe the configuration of interactions (p. 143). For example, the use of clues led members to construct first order models of hypothetical drug development processes that their natural science background suggested might work. Elaborating and narrowing were driven by clues that made some hypothetical configurations more plausible than others. For example, a biology team leader described a breakthrough in developing a drug to treat a serious side effect of kidney disease. The team imagined a plausible configuration in which a smaller molecule could bind with a very large molecule and succeeded in 'imagining a new kind of drug' (p. 145). Finally, reiterating and reframing the imagined configurations occurred when disciplinary boundaries were crossed and information was provided from different perspectives: 'it is a reiterative process where the biologists will not only provide the data but can also tell us a lot about our molecules that we could not foresee' (p. 149).

Dunne & Dougherty (2016) display key features of the interpretive social science framework. They collected data on the workplace practices, first order constructs and theories of new drug development processes of their informants. They undertook interviews and analysed their data with grounded theory methods to uncover members' theories of how to successfully develop new drugs. They

developed second order concepts to integrate and explain the concepts and working theories of their informants. Members' theories tended to involve imagining hypothetical configurations of drug development-related features that provided plausible paths to success. The second order framework involved 'mechanisms' that propelled abductive reasoning forward and that both members and researchers came to see as promising bases for successful drug creation. Repeated and extensive comparisons of first order data with second order emergent concepts were undertaken to ensure the second order constructs captured and preserved members' first order concepts and meanings and were logically consistent in relation to one another.

The researchers substantiated their analyses through presentation of extensive data that reveal the patterns of meaning and action in their second order concepts that were consistent with first order data. The researchers also extended their framework beyond the current data to hypothesize 'barriers to abductive reasoning that, if removed, might enhance implementation' (p. 153). They described an ideal type drug creation process and conceived of hypothetical configurations that differed from those observed in the study to suggest alternative variations that might influence the outcomes of the innovation process. They also discussed how their emergent framework differed from many frameworks previously developed in the innovation literature.

CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE OF INTERPRETIVE SOCIAL SCIENCE

This chapter describes the interpretive social science method that originated in early sociology and that has been refined in recent years. Features of the method have been used in a wide range of important organizational research, although its use has often been more implicit than explicit.

There are several issues that qualitative interpretive social science needs to address to become more influential in organizational research. One issue is that the foundations of interpretive social science are based in phenomenological philosophy and sociology, areas that are difficult to comprehend for scholars who are not familiar with them. It is important for organizational scholars to become familiar with the foundations of social science research methods and to be trained to use this knowledge to further develop existing methodological approaches as an alternative to using an 'anything goes' approach to developing new methods for qualitative research. Also, the methodology of ideal types has a problematic label, since these models are not 'ideal' as in perfect, but are ideal by being abstract, parsimonious schemata that capture key features of actor and action types. Thus, a better understanding of the methodology of ideal types would be helpful for developing more explicit and systematic model building processes that are effective for descriptive and theorizing purposes. A further opportunity is to improve, clarify and refine features of the interpretive social science process and to better understand and explain how one moves from commonsense reasoning to scientific theory and then back again.

Also, it is important to adapt research methods to problems at hand rather than using rigid templates (Langley & Abdullah, 2011) and to be transparent in describing what was really done, rather than offering stylized depictions of methods that omit information about actual research practices. As Malterud (2001, p. 486) notes in the context of interpretive medical science, 'A thorough, well-prepared and well-documented analysis is what distinguishes [the] scientific approach from superficial conjecture'. Silverman (2006, p. 276) and Malterud (2001, p. 485) offer criteria for assessing scientific aspects of interpretive research and constructing transparent accounts of qualitative research methods that can help interpretive social

science scholars articulate the details of their methods. These methods are the foundations of social science practices and knowledge.

Finally, it is important to note that the interpretive social science conception of first and second order concepts differs from other conceptions of these terms. The 'Gioia method' (Gioia et al., 2012) exemplifies this difference. The 'Gioia method' focuses on concept development, not construct development (p. 16). The proponents see concepts as precursors to constructs and 'believe that focusing too much on refining our existing constructs amounts to sharpening the wrong tools' (p. 16). The Gioia method creates distance between first order concepts and second order themes and separates the commonsense view from the scientific view by labelling one view 'informant centric' and the other 'researcher centric' (p. 18). Themes trace a unidirectional path from data (first order) to theory (second order) (Gioia, et al., 2012). This contrasts with interpretive social science, which develops second order constructs from members' first order concepts and ensures that second order concepts preserve members' meanings and are understandable to them. The Gioia method also focuses on description, explanation and prescription (p. 16), whereas the interpretive social science method includes description, understanding, prediction and verification, and de-emphasizes prescription.

Further, the Gioia method uses traditional grounded theory coding, hence coding categories are not necessarily developed from members' terms and meanings (p. 20). And the Gioia method is portrayed as an inductive approach to concept development, in contrast to interpretive social science which uses formal logic, induction, deduction, retroduction and abduction to develop concepts and constructs. Another difference is the emphasis the Gioia method places on 'data structure' as the basis for theory building versus the interpretive social science emphasis on using the subjective meanings

of members and second order constructs for theory building. Further, the Gioia method uses 'box and arrow' representations of theory (p. 22) and prefers to avoid formal propositions and hypotheses. In contrast, the interpretive science approach uses ideal type models presented in narratives and tables, as well as formal propositions, to portray theory. Finally, the Gioia method focuses on the convincingness of research to readers as a foundation for rigor in contrast to the interpretive social science focus on the logic and integrity of research methods. These are not all the differences, but this discussion should encourage readers to examine how terms such as first and second order concepts are used in different methods.

To conclude, the debate concerning the appropriate methods for a social science of organizations has led many scholars to remain relatively silent about the prospects of developing an interpretive social science, although many scholars have quietly used features of the interpretive social science method to do innovative research. Many organizational scholars view quantitative and qualitative positivism as better choices to ensure publications in major journals and hence positivist perspectives remain dominant approaches to research. This belief leads to the privileging of positivist logics, quantitative data and natural science-like methods over interpretive logics, qualitative data and phenomenology-informed social science methods.

To offer a counterpoint to current beliefs, this chapter endorses Schutz's view of the primacy of interpretive methods over positivist methods and views qualitative data and analyses as foundational for – not subservient to – quantitative data and analyses (Gephart, 1988). Put simply, one cannot measure something without first knowing about the qualities of the measured entity, hence quantitative research cannot be undertaken without prior qualitative knowledge of phenomena. More broadly, Schutz notes that the methodological problem of how

knowledge is possible through natural science is a special case of the broader qualitative question of how scientific knowledge itself is possible. He argues that phenomenology has prepared the grounds for an essentially qualitative investigation of the principles that govern all human knowledge, including quantitative, positivistic knowledge. Further, he asserts that the qualitative, methodological devices of interpretive social sciences – the abductive method and method of ideal types – ‘might [be] better suited than those [quantitative methods] of natural science to lead to the discovery of general principles which govern all human knowledge’ (Schutz, 1973b, p. 66). Qualitative knowledge is thus foundational to understanding any form of knowledge and is privileged in interpretive social science.

The interpretive science of organizations can provide qualitative foundations for qualitative and quantitative research (Gephart, 1988) that contribute to answering the fundamental questions of how human knowledge is possible and how it is used. Interpretive studies in the sociology of science (e.g. Knorr-Cetina, 1981, 1999; Lynch, 1985, 1993) and technological innovation (Barley, 1986; Dunne & Dougherty, 2016) support Schutz’s argument by demonstrating how commonsense reasoning and situated meanings in organizational contexts are intertwined with and foundational for the production of scientific knowledge.

An interpretive social science approach could help shape organizational inquiry into an important field that links commonsense meanings, scientific theory and social practice in ways that provide well-substantiated knowledge. Interpretive science methods can discover and address important scholarly and societal challenges that positivist research and many other forms of organizational scholarship cannot resolve, much less grasp, due to their lack of consideration of the actual meanings social actors have and use in everyday life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Anne Smith for very helpful comments and feedback that greatly improved the manuscript. Thanks also to Gina Grandy for her patience, helpful comments and encouragement.

REFERENCES

- Agar, M. (1980) *The Professional Stranger: An Informal Introduction to Ethnography*. Orlando, FL: Academic Press.
- Barley, S. (1986) ‘Technology as an occasion for structuring: evidence from observations of CT scanners and the social order of radiology departments’, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 31(1), 78–108.
- Barley, S. (2015) ‘Why the Internet makes buying a car less loathsome: how technologies change role relations’, *Academy of Management Discoveries*, 1(1), 31–60.
- Bhattacharya, H. (2008) ‘Interpretive research’, in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Downloaded from: file:///H:/ES-Sage/sage-encyc-qualitative-research-methods.pdf, 23 October 2016.
- Boehlke, J. (2005) ‘Juicing their way to the top: an ethnography of a tattoo shop’, in D. McCurdy, J.P. Spradley & D.J. Shandy (eds), *The Cultural Experience: Ethnography in Complex Society*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, pp. 112–20.
- Bittner, E. (1974) ‘The concept of organization’, in R. Turner (ed.), *Ethnomethodology*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Education, pp. 69–81.
- Blaikie, N. (1993) *Approaches to Social Inquiry*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Burrell, G. & G. Morgan (1979) *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis*. London: Heinemann.
- Cicourel, A.V. (1980) ‘Three models of discourse analysis: the role of social structure’, *Discourse Processes*, 3, 101–32.
- Coulon, A. (1995) *Ethnomethodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Denzin, N.K. & Y.S. Lincoln (2005) 'Preface', in N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (eds), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. ix–xix.
- Douglas, J., P.A. Adler, P. Adler, A. Fontana, C. Freeman & R. Kotarba (1980) *Introduction to the Sociologies of Everyday Life*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.
- Dunne, D.D. & D. Dougherty (2016) 'Abductive reasoning: how innovators navigate in the labyrinth of complex innovation', *Organization Studies*, 37(2), 131–59.
- Freeman, R.C. (1980) 'Phenomenological sociology and ethnomethodology', in J. Douglas, P.A. Adler, P. Adler, A. Fontana, C. Robert Freeman & J. Kotarba (eds), *Introduction to the Sociologies of Everyday Life*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., pp. 113–54.
- Garfinkel, H. (1956) 'Conditions of successful degradation ceremonies', *American Journal of Sociology*, 61(5), 420–24.
- Garfinkel, H. (1964) 'Studies of the routine grounds of everyday activities', *Social Problems*, 22(3), 225–50.
- Garfinkel, H. (1967) *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Gephart, R.P. (1978) 'Status degradation and organizational succession: an ethnomethodological approach', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 23(4), 553–81.
- Gephart, R.P. (1988) *Ethnostatistics: Qualitative Foundations for Quantitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gephart, R.P. (1993) 'The textual approach: risk and blame in disaster sensemaking', *Academy of Management Journal*, 36(6), 1465–514.
- Gephart, R.P. (1997) 'Hazardous measures: an interpretive textual analysis of quantitative sensemaking during crises', *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 18, 583–622.
- Gephart, R.P. (2004) 'From the editors: qualitative research and the *Academy of Management Journal*', *Academy of Management Journal*, 47(4), 454–62.
- Gephart, R.P. (2013) 'Doing research with words: qualitative methodologies and I/O psychology', in R. Landis and J. Cortina (eds), *Modern Research Methods for the Study of Behaviour in Organizations*. New York: Taylor & Francis/Psychology Press, pp. 265–317.
- Gephart, R.P., C. Topal & Z. Zhang (2010) 'Future-oriented sensemaking: temporalities and legitimation', in T. Hernes and S. Maitlis (eds), *Process, Sensemaking & Organizing*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, pp. 275–311.
- Giddens, A. (1976) *New Rules of Sociological Method*. London: Hutchinson & Company.
- Gioia, D., K. Corley & A. Hamilton (2012). 'Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research: Notes on the Gioia methodology'. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(1), 15–31.
- Glaser, B. & A. Strauss (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Chicago: Aldine Press.
- Goffman, E. (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City, NJ: Doubleday Press.
- Goffman, E. (1974) *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. New York: Harper & Rowe.
- Goffman, E. (1983) 'The interaction order', *American Sociological Review*, 48(1), 1–17.
- Golden-Biddle, K. & K. Locke (1993) 'Appealing work: an investigation of how ethnographic texts convince', *Organization Science*, 4(4), 595–616.
- Hassard, J. (1993) *Sociology and Organization Theory: Positivism, Paradigms and Postmodernity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Heap, J. (1976) What are sense making practices? *Sociological Inquiry*, 46(2), 107–15.
- Kelle, U. (1995) *Computer-aided Qualitative Data Analysis: Theory, Methods and Practice*. London: Sage.
- Knorr-Cetina, K.D. (1981) *The Manufacture of Knowledge*. New York: Permagon Press.
- Knorr-Cetina, K. (1999) *Epistemic Cultures: How the Sciences Make Knowledge*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Langley, A. & C. Abdallah (2011) 'Templates and turns in qualitative studies of strategy and management', in Donald D. Bergh, David J. Ketchen (ed.) *Building Methodological Bridges. Research Methodology in Strategy and Management, Volume 6*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited, pp. 201–35.
- Locke, K. (2002) 'The grounded theory approach to qualitative research', in F. Drasgow & N. Schmitt (eds), *Measuring and Analyzing Behavior in Organization*, pp. 14–43. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Lynch, M. (1985) *Art and Artefact in Laboratory Science: A Study of Show Work and Shop Talk in a Research Laboratory*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Lynch, M. (1993) *Scientific Practice and Ordinary Action: Ethnomethodology and Social Studies of Science*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- McCurdy, D., J.P. Spradley, & D.J. Shandy (2005) *The Cultural Experience: Ethnography in Complex Society*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- Malterud, K. (2001) 'Qualitative research: standards, challenges and guidelines', *The Lancet*, 358, 483–88.
- Mehan, H. and H. Wood (1975) *The Reality of Ethnomethodology*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Mills, A., G. Durepos & E. Wiebe (2010) *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Orlikowski, W.J. (1996) Improvising organizational transformation over time: a situated change perspective, *Information Systems Research*, 7(1), 63–92.
- Perlow, L. (1997) *Finding Time*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Schutz, A. (1967) *The Phenomenology of the Social World*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Schutz, A. (1973a) 'Common-sense and scientific interpretation of human action', in M. Natanson (ed.), *Alfred Schutz Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, pp. 1–47.
- Schutz, A. (1973b) 'Concept and theory formation in the social sciences', in M. Natanson (ed.), *Alfred Schutz Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, pp. 48–66.
- Selznik, P. (1948) Foundations of a theory of organization, *American Sociological Review*, 13, 25–35.
- Silverman, D. (2006) *Interpreting Qualitative Data, 3rd Edn*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Spradley, J.P. (1979) *The Ethnographic Interview*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Turner, R. (1974) 'Introduction', in R. Turner (ed.), *Ethnomethodology*. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Education, pp. 15–18.
- Van Maanen, J. (1973) Observations on the making of policemen, *Human Organization*, 32(4), 407–18.
- Van Maanen, J. (1981) *Fieldwork on the beat: an informal introduction to organizational ethnography*. Presented to the Center for Creative Leadership, Greensboro, NC, 26–27 March.
- Van Maanen, J. (1998). 'Different strokes: Qualitative research om the Administrative Science Quarterly from 1956 to 1996', in J. Van Maanen (ed.), *Qualitative Studies of Organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. ix–xxxii
- Walsh, I., J. Holton, L. Bailyn, W. Fernandez, Levina, & B. Glaser (2015) What grounded theory is ... A critically reflective conversation among scholars, *Organizational Research Methods*, 18(4), 581–99.
- Weber, M. (1978) *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Edited by G. Roth and C. Wittich, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Weeks, J. (2004) *Unpopular Culture: The Ritual of Complaint in a British Bank*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Weick, K. (1995) *Sensemaking in Organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Wicks, A. & R. Freeman (1998) Organization studies and the new pragmatism: positivism, anti-positivism, and the search for ethics, *Organization Science*, 9(2), 123–40.

Pragmatism: A Philosophy of Practice

Barbara Simpson

The word ‘pragmatism’ is commonly used in the English language to denote the practicalities of just getting on and doing what the situation demands. It seems to invite easy compromise, short-term expediency and taking the path of least resistance without the encumbrance of theoretical principles or values. In the context of research, it has often been used to imply an anodyne alternative that might be adopted when there appears to be no clear paradigmatic preference to guide the process of inquiry; in effect, it is presented as philosophically neutral, a ‘non-philosophy’ that skims over the surface rather than trying to resolve ambiguities in any of the assumptions underpinning different research questions and approaches. This is a vulgar conception of pragmatism that offers little reason for confidence in any knowledge claims that it may produce. By comparison, Classical Pragmatism, which is the subject of this chapter, is a thoroughly elaborated philosophy that accounts for the social experience of living and working together.

Henceforth, I will signify this specifically philosophical meaning with an initial capital letter, Pragmatism. As philosophies go though, it is unusual because it rejects formalisms and abstractions in favour of a genuine concern for how our worlds continuously unfold through our collective efforts to cope with the day-to-day exigencies of modern life. Pragmatism thus has considerable potential to inform those aspects of business and management research that are concerned with the dynamics of human and social practice.

The beginnings of Pragmatism can be traced to intellectual movements that were emerging globally in the mid-nineteenth century (Bernstein, 1972). These were exciting times when new developments in science, such as Darwin’s (1859) theory of evolution and Maxwell’s (1865) theory of electrodynamics, were firing the imaginations of scholars across all disciplines, opening up new ways of thinking about the ‘blossoming, buzzing confusion’ (James, 1890 [1952], p. 318) of our world. It was a time of great

flourishing, not only in philosophy and science, but also in the arts and literature. Pragmatism arose in the specific context of the post-Civil War United States of America. It proposed radically different ways of thinking about the future, the lives that citizens would live, how they should be educated, how they could give voice to their views and how they might engage in political processes. Democracy, education, liberty and justice were the central planks of the original Pragmatist movement, and arguably they still remain at the heart of contemporary culture in the USA (Menand, 2001). However, it is also fair to say that the reach of Pragmatism now extends far beyond its geographic origins, as a living philosophy that addresses human practice in any situation, regardless of its cultural or historical context.

As with any movement of thought, the precise origins of Pragmatism are buried in the myriad conversations amongst intellectuals of the day. However, four key contributors are generally recognised: Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, John Dewey and George Herbert Mead. They most certainly knew each other and discussed each other's work, but it was never their intention to form a 'school of thought' called Pragmatism. The differences between them were considerable, leading to a certain amount of ridicule amongst the philosophers of their day. For instance, Lovejoy (1908) claimed to have identified 13 distinct interpretations of Pragmatism from his own limited reading of Peirce, James and Dewey, while Chesterton (1908, p. 62) complained that if pragmatism 'is a matter of human needs ... [then] one of the first of human needs is to be something more than a [P]ragmatist'. On closer examination though, there are numerous threads that tie these Pragmatist philosophers together as a coherent group (see the list of classic Pragmatist readings provided at the end of this chapter). They were all concerned with the effectiveness of thinking/doing, where in their view, thinking and doing are as inseparable as two sides of the

same coin. They developed a future-oriented instrumentalism that starts from doubt, and proceeds through an experimental attitude of inquiry to construct emergent futures. At the same time, they were reformist intellectuals committed to the improvement of society. Both Dewey and Mead worked with Jane Addams, another recognised Pragmatist from this period, on the Hull House project. This exemplary model of the settlement-house movement was directed towards improving the lives of workers in the rapidly industrialising city of Chicago by promoting activism at the local level. To support this agenda, they developed a method of participatory democracy, which they described as a community of inquiry (Shields, 2003).

Commentaries on Pragmatism often map out a 'rise, fall, and rise again' pattern that saw these ideas relegated to dusty bookshelves by the mid-twentieth century, but then re-emerging in the neo-pragmatism of Richard Rorty (1980) and his student, Robert Brandom (1994). Whilst this narrative undoubtedly reflects the rise of analytic philosophy and the subsequent linguistic turn in social theory, it neglects developments in Pragmatist thinking that were ongoing throughout the twentieth century, as evidenced in works as diverse as those by Blumer, Cooley, Follett, Lewis, Miller, Rescher, Schiller, Sellars and Thayer, to name just a few. Today, Classical Pragmatism, which is distinguished from Rorty's linguistic neo-pragmatism by its attention to the situated doings, rather than just the sayings, of practice, continues to develop as a living philosophy (see for instance Aboulafia, 2001; Bernstein, 2010; Joas, 1993; Rosenthal, Hausman et al., 1999; Talisse & Aikin, 2008) that is continuously on the move. It is futile, therefore, to try to pin down a definitive definition of exactly what Pragmatism is; it is perhaps better understood as a celebration of pluralism that offers a multiplicity of enticing options for researchers who are seeking more dynamic and more processual ways of engaging with their research contexts and questions.

Doing full justice to all this rich diversity is an impossibility, especially within the constraints of a book chapter such as this, so in what follows I will attend specifically to those elements of Pragmatism that I have found most useful in my own research in the business and management domain. This is very much a personal perspective that is in no way intended to preclude alternative takes on what Pragmatism has to offer; indeed, I would encourage others to mine their own interpretations from this philosophically rich vein. I begin in the next section with an analysis of where Pragmatism ‘fits’ in relation to other philosophical positions that commonly appear in the social sciences. I then go on to tease out a set of six inter-related theoretical concepts that have potential to directly inform the study of organisational and management practice as thinking/doing. The chapter concludes with a brief survey of how Pragmatism has already been used in some of the disciplines of business research.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL DIMENSIONS OF PRAGMATISM

The underpinning assumptions that characterise Pragmatism may be summed up as a radical commitment to a non-reductive naturalism, which is anti-foundationalist, anti-dualistic and emergent. From this perspective, we are always already active in the natural world, so the meanings that we attach to life are never independent of our own actions and collective histories, and neither can they be reduced to entities that have any independent ontological reality. William James (1912 [2006]) argued that empirical engagement with a world that is in continuous motion entails direct experience gained through immersion in the situation of concern, unmediated by theoretical constructs or abstractions. It is continuity in the flow of experience that, in his view, defines the reality of nature. He contrasted this with

the rationalist tendency to partition experience into discrete and unconnected things, which produces a static snapshot of the world in an instant of time. For James, a radical empiricist attitude

must neither admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced, nor exclude from them any element that is directly experienced. For such a philosophy, *the relations that connect experiences must themselves be experienced relations, and any kind of relation experienced must be accounted as ‘real’ as anything else in the system.* (1912 [2006], p. 20, italics in original)

This emphasis on continuity and process is a unifying theme in Pragmatist thinking, albeit that individual writers express and explore it in their own unique ways. Pragmatism may thus be subsumed under the umbrella of process philosophy, which is an area of growing scholarly interest in organisation studies (Helin et al., 2014).

An immediate corollary to this naturalistic view of a world-in-process is the rejection of foundationalist assumptions about knowledge as ultimately founded on justified beliefs and immutable laws of nature. For researchers working from a reductive perspective, these laws are understood as essential building blocks that permit truths to be revealed about the complexities of nature. However, if nature is perpetually evolving, not only can there be no enduring laws, entities, nor indeed any other pre-determined stabilities, but also there can be no beginning nor end point to the process. Nature is then understood in terms of the dynamic inter-plays between its co-evolving aspects, where both the whole and the parts are in continuous, co-constructive engagement. The particular insight that the Pragmatists bring to this evolutionary dynamic is to understand the continuity of nature not only as a mere product of history, but also as a function of what we anticipate may happen next. In other words, we make bets on how the world will be tomorrow, and it is these bets that shape our actions today (Menand, 2001).

This idea was first articulated by Peirce in what has come to be accepted as the original Pragmatist maxim:

Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object. (1878, p. 293)

In an ever-changing, probabilistic world then, far from being the immutable facts proposed by Descartes, the beliefs that guide our actions are our best guesses, or bets, about how things will turn out if we act this way or that. Whereas rationalists assume a strong teleological view in which outcomes are largely pre-determined, Pragmatists adopt a more fallible, short-term, non-intentional teleology that blends outcomes and actions as co-evolving aspects of a world-in-process (Simpson, 2009). By rejecting the philosophical claim that knowledge must have foundations, Pragmatism challenges the epistemic principles that are commonly used to describe how knowledge may be objectively grasped and represented (Talisie & Aikin, 2008). It offers instead a view of knowing as a social and situated accomplishment that both shapes, and is shaped by, the lived experience of knowers; in other words, epistemology and ontology cease to be distinct philosophical categories.

Dualisms distinguish between two epistemological categories of nature that are seen as mutually excluding opposites. For instance, Descartes' distinction between mind and body and Aristotle's separation of practical action (praxis) from scientific reasoning (theoria) are examples of dualisms that have profoundly influenced Western philosophy. Also in the social sciences, dualisms such as micro and macro, individual and collective, change and stability, art and science, are all well established. The making of such distinctions is, of course, an essential function of language, but when a linguistic clarification becomes fixed as a habit of thinking, the world is reduced to a set of bounded

entities, which at best offer a greatly simplified representation of the objects and ideas, the 'things', that constitute meaning. The anti-dualistic stance in Pragmatism is a critical response to this 'thingification' of lived experience in a world-in-process. Dewey, in particular, took up this cause, reworking and refining his arguments throughout his long working career. For instance, in his early critique of the reflex arc, Dewey (1896) challenged the familiar stimulus and response dualism in psychology. Using as an example a child reaching out to a burning flame, Dewey protested that an analysis which starts with the sensation of light as a stimulus, which then elicits the response of grasping the flame, which in turn results in a burning sensation that stimulates the response of withdrawing the hand, and so on, provides nothing more than 'a patchwork of disjointed parts, a mechanical conjunction of unallied processes' (1896, p. 358). In his view, the stimulus/response dualism slices across the dynamic unfolding of the situation, reducing it to a contrived series of discrete and static instants in time. He offered an alternative perspective in which the movements of sensory-motor coordinations are taken to be ontologically prior to both stimulus and response, so it is these movements that reveal the empirical qualities of experience. In order to capture unfractured continuity then, rather than defining 'things' in dualistic terms, Dewey conceived them as unfolding and interweaving histories, or trajectories, that are made manifest within the possibilities afforded by any given situation (Dewey & Bentley, 1949[1960]). 'Things' may then be re-conceptualised as performative adjustments within the ongoing flow of practice.

Pragmatism's commitment to continuity calls for ways of theorising practice as a never-ending process of transformation that weaves stability and change together into some sort of unified but ephemeral fabric. Stability and change are not conceived here as alternative or competing 'pictures' of the world, but rather as complementary tools that

work together to facilitate action. It is in their interplay that novelty emerges and situations are transformed, and without emergence there can be no possibility of emancipation or social improvement. This notion of emergence as fundamental to the Pragmatist project is most clearly evidenced in Mead's thinking about the function of creativity in evolutionary processes (see Joas, 1996). Mead set out firstly to counter classical foundationalist assumptions that for emergents to appear in an evolutionary process, they must have been immanent from the outset, and secondly to challenge vitalist assumptions that emergence implies mysterious forces at play. For him, creativity emerges in the social dynamics of practice. It is when we figuratively stand in the shoes of someone else, 'taking the role of the other' (Mead, 1934, p. 254), that we reflexively realise alternatives for further cooperative action; and equally it is when different past and future trajectories interact in the present that new directions emerge as turning points, or qualitative changes in the flow of action (Simpson, 2014). Practice is thus conceived as a social and improvisational process that is accomplished within the spatial and temporal dimensions of living contexts. Mead's unique contribution to the Pragmatist understanding of emergence lies in his radical departure from classical ideas of time in order to develop a social temporality in which trajectories of movement are works in progress, continuously re-constructed in the activities of social engagement (Garud et al., 2015).

The picture I have painted here of the philosophical underpinnings of Pragmatism, although resonating comfortably with the lived experience of practice, is nevertheless quite distinct from more familiar 'paradigms' of research. What then is 'real' from a Pragmatist perspective, and how can we know this reality? Putnam (1990) argued that Pragmatism's ontological commitment is constructed within conceptual frameworks, the continuing relevance of which is dependent upon their pragmatic value in guiding our best bets on what will happen next. Thus,

although no description of the world can be inherent in nature, it can still matter to the extent that it serves human interests and purposes. It is inevitable that what serves as real will emerge over time and as situations vary, which in turn challenges conventional notions of causality. Putnam coined the term 'pragmatic realism' to capture the non-reductive pluralism of this mild form of realism, and its capacity to accommodate the continuity of emergence. He was at pains to emphasise, though, that pragmatic realism does have explanatory significance in the day-to-day unfolding of practice, so it must not be dismissed as unfettered relativism.

To appreciate the philosophical differences implied by a Pragmatist approach to research, it is helpful to compare it to other approaches commonly used in the business and management domain. Burrell & Morgan (1979) mapped out what they saw as the range of possible paradigms available to organisational analysts. They used a 2x2 matrix that differentiates between Functionalist, Interpretive, Radical Humanist and Radical Structuralist paradigms, each of which is defined in terms of its own unique combination of ontology, epistemology, assumptions about human nature and methodologies. In the intervening years, this matrix has been widely used by researchers as a philosophical positioning tool, but it is also increasingly criticised as an over-wrought and incomplete image of the world – one that privileges modernist assumptions about the nature of reality at the expense of more postmodern sensibilities in research. Although Burrell and Morgan did locate a number of different theoretical approaches on their paradigm map (see 1979, pp. 29–30), they did not include Pragmatism in their original analysis. Given, however, that their framework is based on two dualistic distinctions (between Objective and Subjective, and between Regulation and Radical change) and a representational rather than a performative logic of inquiry, it is difficult to see any possibility of a fit for Pragmatism, with its anti-foundationalist and anti-dualistic orientation.

This lack of fit invites researchers to liberate themselves from the constraints of Burrell and Morgan's framework in order to appreciate other philosophical perspectives that may be more sensitive to the postmodern problematics of continuity and flow (Chia, 1995).

SOME KEY CONCEPTS IN PRAGMATISM

In the preceding section, I have laid out the distinctive philosophical features of the Classical Pragmatist project. I now turn to examine six theoretical concepts in Pragmatism that I have found useful in the empirical study of practice in business and management – abduction, inquiry, habit, social selves, gestural conversation and trans-action. The presentation of each of these as a discrete concept must, however, be understood as a purely heuristic device; in practice, they are better understood as interweaving and co-constructing dynamics.

Abduction

Much of Peirce's writing on Pragmatism was concerned with eliminating ideas that are doubtful or unclear, and clarifying ideas that may be difficult to apprehend (Peirce, 1965: Volume 5, para. 206). As part of this process, he proposed abduction (sometimes also known as retroduction) as an inferential logic

that complements and extends deduction and induction. It is, he argued, the process of forming an hypothesis to explain a given situation; abduction is a creative leap, 'an act of insight' that 'comes to us like a flash' (1965: Volume 5, para. 181). It is the only conceivable source of novelty in thinking/doing as it suggests the possibility 'that something *may be*', while 'Deduction proves that something *must* be [and] Induction shows that something *actually is* operative' (1965: Volume 5, para. 171, italics in original). Peirce illustrated the syllogistic differences between these three logics using the example of a bag of beans (1965: Volume 2, para. 623):

Here, the logic of deduction proceeds from a general rule (all the beans in this bag are white) to the prediction of a particular outcome (these beans are white), while inductive logic works in the opposite direction, drawing a general rule from particular observations. By contrast, abductive logic lacks the certainty of deduction or induction; rather, it brings new insight by suggesting a possible explanation for observed events (these beans are [may be] from this bag). Whilst deduction and induction are adequate inferential tools for a world that already exists, the emergence of a world-in-process cannot be accounted for without the logic of abduction. Returning to Peirce's original Pragmatist maxim, the practical effects that any object may have are anticipated abductively as hunches, or bets that we place on the future. '[I]f we are ever to learn

Table 4.1 Three logics of inference

Deduction	Rule	All the beans from this bag are white
	Case	These beans are from this bag
	∴ Result	These beans are white
Induction	Case	These beans are from this bag
	Result	These beans are white
	∴ Rule	All the beans from this bag are white
Abduction	Rule	All the beans from this bag are white
	Result	These beans are white
	∴ Case	These beans are from this bag

anything or to understand phenomena at all, it must be by abduction ... every single item of scientific theory which stands established today has been due to Abduction' (Peirce, 1965: Volume 5, paras 171–2).

Peirce likened abduction to detective work, which depends not only on observing the fine details of the situation, but also on formulating plausible explanations for these details.

I perform an abduction when I so much as express in a sentence anything I see. The truth is that the whole fabric of our knowledge is one matted felt of pure hypothesis confirmed and refined by induction. Not the smallest advance can be made in knowledge beyond the stage of vacant staring, without making an abduction at every step. (Peirce, quoted by Sebeok & Umiker-Sebeok, 1988, p. 16)

The skill of the detective, as exemplified for instance by Sherlock Holmes, is to gather many small observations and to abductively infer their possible consequences within this ever-changing fabric of knowledge. By testing each of the logical components of an hypothesis one at a time, the detective meticulously reduces the uncertainty of the situation. It is precisely this reduction of doubt that Peirce saw as necessary if we are to 'make our ideas clear' (1878). Within the domain of business and management research, the importance of abductive logic has been recognised in generating new theory (Locke et al., 2008) and indeed, as a critical element in all scientific reasoning (Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013). Whilst it is not a research methodology in its own right, abductive logic is always required when researchers seek explanations for the unexpected and surprising events in their experience (Agar, 2010). To the extent that practice is understood as emergent then, the inherently creative concept of abduction is what links practice to theory (Joas, 1996).

Inquiry

For Peirce, 'inquiry' is a process that is initiated when there is doubt, and completed when

this doubt is resolved. It is a learning process in which meanings are reconstructed in the continuously evolving relationship between practice and context. Doubt signals some sort of deficiency in the continuity of practice/context, which in turn invites the generative action of inquiry. Whereas Peirce saw it primarily as a logical process for clarifying ideas, Dewey took the concept of inquiry much further, developing it as an existential, rather than merely cognitive, process that transforms what he called 'the situation', which is the whole set of conditions out of which actions emerge, into something new. 'Inquiry is the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole' (Dewey, 1938 [1986], p. 108). He maintained that inquiry is pervasive in all human experience. 'In everyday living, men examine; they turn things over intellectually; they infer and judge as "naturally" as they reap and sow, produce and exchange commodities' (1938 [1986], p. 106). The difference between common-sense inquiry and scientific inquiry is, in Dewey's view, simply a matter of their respective subject matters; both, he argued, share the same basic structure of inquiry. It is valuable then, for us as researchers to delve deeper into what this structure is.

Inquiry begins with doubt, which is experienced as an existential unease, or a felt sense, that arises when our bets on what will happen next prove to be inadequate. The first phase of inquiry involves finding an explanation for this sense of unease by structuring it as a problem of some sort. In this sense, inquiry precedes more familiar 'problem-solving' processes or techniques, for which the problem is given at the outset. Using abductive logic, explanatory hypotheses are inferred; their veracity is then tested using deductive logic; and, finally, inductive logic confirms that the hypothesised relations are indeed at work. Thus, from beginning to end, inquiry is grounded in the temporal unfolding of

practice. All three of the inferential logics, abduction, deduction and induction, are here involved in a continuous interplay that produces what Dewey called ‘warranted assertions’, a term that acknowledges the tentative nature of all knowledge as it is continually challenged in emerging situations. This understanding of the provisional nature of knowledge is a clear rejection of ‘spectator’ epistemologies that seek certainty by locating the observer in a fixed position outside the flow of action. Rather, the researcher is invited to plunge in as a participant in the emerging inquiry. In contrast to much of the contemporary advice on research methods, which advocates either an exclusively deductive, or inductive, or sometimes even a purely abductive approach, inquiry offers a more comprehensive understanding of human experience and practice in which all three logics of reasoning are engaged. It is the interplay between these logics that gives inquiry the dynamic potential that has been recognised and valued by business and management scholars working in organisational learning (Elkjaer, 2004), experiential learning (Miettinen, 2000), and routines theory (Cohen, 2007; Winter, 2013).

Habit

Every inquiry involves habits of action that function as both a resource and an outcome of the process. It is habits that allow us to anticipate what will happen next, and they guide us in taking actions appropriate to the current situation. The ‘what next of chief importance is the one nearest the present state of the one acting. ... Now the thing which is closest to us, the means within our power, is a habit’ (Dewey, 1922/1957, pp. 36–7). In theoretical terms, habits are commonly thought of as automatic reflexes that require no conscious thought; they are seen as mechanical, recurrent and predictable patterns of behaviour that are idiosyncratically individualistic; and once established, they remain as permanently

fixed features of an individual’s conduct. Defined in this way, it is difficult to integrate the notion of habit into the dynamic continuity of inquiry as an emergent process. The Pragmatists, and once again particularly Dewey, set about re-defining habit as altogether more fluid, more lively and more social than the commonly held understandings. For them, habit is not a mechanical response to a given stimulus, but rather it is an acquired and mutable predisposition to act in certain ways in certain situations; it is ‘an attitude of response’ (Mead, 1938, p. 3), not a rigid prescription for action. As such, habits are only ever loosely teleological, never fully determining how practice will unfold. In addition, they are themselves continuously modified as they are re-assessed in the moment-by-moment situational contexts of inquiry.

Although this is a very different interpretation of ‘habit’, Dewey preferred to continue using this term, arguing that

we need a word that expresses that kind of human activity which is influenced by prior activity and in that sense acquired; which contains within itself a certain ordering or systematization of minor elements of action; which is projective, dynamic in quality, ready for overt manifestation; and which is operative in some subdued subordinate form even when not obviously dominating activity. (1922/1957, p. 31).

A crucial feature of the Pragmatist view is that habit is an inherently social concept. Habits are not immaculately conceived; they are acquired as we engage with other actors in a variety of situations that influence both our own and others’ choices about what to do next. Dewey argued that the customs and institutions of society exist not as agglomerations of ‘individuals’ habits’; they arise because our predispositions to act are both formed and exercised in situations that are always already social. This active quality of habit provides a basis for moral society, where the values embedded in habits are always open to reflexive revision and cultivation. From a Pragmatist perspective, the values we live

by are warranted not by pure reason, nor by external fiat, and neither are they intrinsic to nature, but rather they arise in human conduct and the choices we make about what to do next. For Dewey then, if society is to thrive, it needs an education system that develops an experimental habit of mind to foster the critical intelligence required to respond in ever-changing circumstances.

Social Selves

It should, by now, be apparent that the Pragmatists were not seeking to theorise at either individual or collective levels of analysis. Indeed, they rejected this dualistic form of thinking in favour of a more holistic and dynamic approach that sees individual selves and their social situations as inseparable in the continuity of just getting on with living. In his social psychological theorising, Mead (1934) developed this idea of selves as ineluctably social by considering the self not as a discrete identity nor even a suite of interchangeable identities, but as a social process in which the conscious mind progressively unfolds and becomes manifest.

It is absurd to look at the mind simply from the standpoint of the individual human organism; for, although it has its focus there, it is essentially a social phenomenon; even its biological functions are primarily social. ... We must regard mind, then, as arising and developing within the social process, within the empirical matrix of social interactions. (1934, p. 133).

He argued that it is only through the social dimensions of living that we can become conscious of the self, because it is only by participating in social situations that we are able to stand back and see the self through the eyes of others as an object located within the social process.

Mead further elaborated this notion of 'the self as social process' by invoking two different aspects of the self, which he called the 'I' and the 'me'. Here he does not construct the

'I' and the 'me' as dualistic opposites on a common dimension of 'selfness'; rather they should be understood as a duality; that is, two completely different ways of experiencing the self. This distinction between dualism and duality is crucial to the Pragmatist project; whereas dualisms are epistemological phenomena that arrest the continuity of process, a duality identifies two ontologically different orientations that are incommensurable (Dewey, 1917). For instance, a common duality in the business and management literature is the distinction between ostensive and performative (or structure and agency) perspectives, where the ostensive view seeks to represent reality, while the performative view enacts reality in practice (Latour, 1986). This same distinction is evident in Mead's presentation of the 'I' and the 'me' as different aspects of the self (1934, pp. 173–8). He described the 'me' as the embodied habits of conduct that have been accumulated through social engagement, where habit is understood in the predispositional Pragmatist sense as mutable and acquired through experience. This is the objective, ostensive aspect of self, which is accessible as an object of deliberate, reflexive examination. The 'I', on the other hand, is the spontaneous, performative response of the self to the present moment. It is an anticipatory gesture that may either reinforce the habits of the 'me', or introduce novel alternatives. Whatever the consequences generated by the 'I', these ultimately may become embedded in the habits of the 'me'. In the process of inquiry both the 'I' and the 'me' are involved, with the 'I' introducing the abductive logic of what might be, and the 'me' reflecting the inductive logic of what is. 'The self is essentially a social process going on with these two distinguishable phases. If it did not have these two phases there could not be conscious responsibility, and there would be nothing novel in experience' (Mead, 1934, p. 178). It is in the interplay between the 'I' and 'me', then, that both selves and situations emerge.

Gestural Conversation

The vehicle for this interplay, Mead argued, is ordinary everyday conversation, in which signs and symbols including spoken and written language are used as communicative gestures in the ongoing construction of social meaning. Every such gesture anticipates a response by in some way participating in the other, by taking the other's role or by standing in the other's shoes; the response that is then called out is itself another anticipatory gesture. It is in the to-and-fro of gesture and response that we not only come to a clearer idea of the world-in-process, but we also develop the capacity for collaborative action.

[T]aking the rôle of the other, an expression I have so often used, is not simply of passing importance. It is not something that just happens as an incidental result of the gesture, but it is important in the development of co-operative activity. The immediate effect of such rôle-taking lies in the control which the individual is able to exercise over his own response. (Mead, 1934, p. 254; see also Mead, 1925)

The consequences of this control thus ripple out across social situations, whilst at the same time diffracting the rippling effects of other conversations. In Mead's view, community can take on 'an institutional form' (1934, p. 167) by means of 'the generalized other' (1934, p. 154), which is the attitude of a whole social group. This is what allows an individual to participate in the attitudes held in common in a community or organisation. For instance, Mead gives the example of players in a baseball game, for whom it is not sufficient to anticipate the moves of individual players; they must also be able to assume the attitudes of the whole team in order to improvise together in a coordinated way as the play proceeds. Without the generalised other, there is also no possibility for internalised conversations of gestures to occur, and thus no opportunity for abstract thinking. 'And only through the taking by individuals of the attitude or attitudes of the generalized other

toward themselves is the existence of a universe of discourse, as that system of common or social meanings which thinking presupposes at its context, rendered possible' (1934, p. 156). It is clear, then, that for Mead the gestural conversation must not be reduced to a purely inter-subjective, micro-phenomenon; rather, it is the motive force in the processes of building communities, institutions and societies.

Taking the role of another, whether this be a specific other or a generalised other, admits the possibility of at least temporarily standing in different shoes and experiencing the current situation differently. It is in perceiving differences between self and other that doubt arises, and this in turn may trigger a process of inquiry. For Mead, the experience of simultaneously occupying two different roles, or frames of reference, is a necessary requirement for any event to be considered social. He coined the term 'sociality' to describe 'the capacity for being several things at once' (1932, p. 75). This capacity appears not only as an ability to simultaneously occupy different standpoints, but also it has a temporal dimension, which Mead described as being 'betwixt and between the old system and the new' (1932, p. 73). Thus, doubt may also be triggered when we are confronted with changing situations where the old and the new are not in sync. By weaving temporality into the conversational dynamics of sociality, Mead has constructed a comprehensive theory of practice that focusses on relational movements across time and space.

Trans-action

In this final phase of my selective review of the complex jigsaw of Pragmatist thinking, I turn to the 1949 book that John Dewey co-authored with Arthur Bentley, late in the careers of both of them. They were interested in exploring differences between the various ways in which action may be theorised. In

particular, they recognised trans-actions as philosophically distinct from inter-actions (see also Emirbayer, 1997; Simpson, 2016). For them, 'inter-action' refers to a dyadic mode of engagement that is characteristic of the modern, rational, Western world. It describes movements in terms of 'particles or other objects organized as operating upon one another' (Dewey & Bentley, 1949[1960], p. 73) in a controlled environment that is independent of any wider context of space and time. This is a mechanistic image of action in which outcomes are produced by forces that act between objects, but which also leave the objects themselves unchanged. The game of billiards is the classic image of this form of action, where balls can influence each other's movements but remain unchanged in their own essential nature. By contrast, Dewey and Bentley's notion of 'trans-action' engages with the world-in-process by privileging flow ahead of 'objects' or 'things', which are always necessarily provisional and tentative. They sought a holistic account of lived experience such that "thing" is in action, and "action" is observable as thing' (1949[1960], p. 123). For them, trans-action is 'unfractured observation – just as it stands, at this era of the world's history, with respect to the observer, the observing, and the observed' (1949[1960], p. 104). Here the actor is continuously emergent within the flow of the integrated whole, which is itself emerging. Some interpreters of Mead's 'conversations of gestures' have treated this dynamic in inter-actional terms (e.g. Blumer, 1969), but his thinking is actually better accommodated by a trans-actional understanding of the relational and processual movements of meaning-making. Trans-action suggests a post-modern sensibility (Chia, 1995) that demands new ways of thinking and talking about experience and practice. In Dewey and Bentley's view, any effort invested in developing these new ways will be worth it, because it will open up the types of questions that are increasingly central to researchers today.

For example, although Pragmatism has often been criticised for its neglect of issues of power and authority, a central concern of business and management scholars, the inter-action/trans-action distinction, does invite some new ways of thinking about this perennial problem. The inter-action model represents the commonly accepted view that the force to act resides within specific individual entities, whether these be billiard balls, CEOs, political leaders, top-performing companies or dominant nations. This force to act is expressed as 'power over' (Follett, 1996, p. 103); that is, more powerful entities exert power over others. Power, then, is an attribute of individuals that may be acquired and possessed. By contrast, the trans-actional view is always already saturated in power, which is then manifest in the changing movements of flow as socially coordinated actions emerge. Here, power is in the situation rather than in individuals, and is itself constantly morphing as an expression of coactive 'power with' (Follett, 1996, p. 103).

Our task is not to learn where to place power; it is how to develop power. ... Genuine power can only be grown, it will slip from every arbitrary hand that grasps it; for genuine power is not coercive control, but coactive control. Coercive power is the curse of the universe; coactive power, the enrichment and advancement of every human soul. (Follett, 1996, p. 119)

The function of management development, then, is less to develop specific attributes in specific managers, and more about building the habit of working together as situations evolve.

PRAGMATISM IN BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES

In the preceding section I have mapped out just a few of the theoretical concepts that are encompassed within the scope of Pragmatist thinking. This breadth of vision has been taken up and continues to be developed in numerous disciplines including philosophy,

education, jurisprudence, public administration, social theory and political science, but surprisingly its impact in business and management studies remains muted. It does appear occasionally as a source of conceptual inspiration in sub-disciplines such as strategy (Powell, 2001, 2002), operations research (Ormerod, 2006), innovation (Nooteboom, 2012), creativity (Adler & Obstfeld, 2007; Arjaliès et al., 2013), new product development (Carlile, 2002), ethics (Martela, 2015; Wicks & Freeman, 1998), gender studies (Rumens & Kelemen, 2010), routines (Cohen, 2007; Dionysiou & Tsoukas, 2013; Winter, 2013), human resource management (Watson, 2010), and also in the philosophical underpinnings of sensemaking and organisational learning (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). At the same time, scholars are increasingly seeking better ways to engage process- and practice-based views in areas such as strategy-as-practice (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009), organisational knowing (Nicolini et al., 2003), leadership-as-practice (Raelin, 2016) and entrepreneuring (Steyaert, 2007), all of which call for more performative ways of working that can better engage with the flexibility and creativity of living organisational experience (James, 1912 [2006]; Latour, 1986; Lorimer, 2005). Whilst Pragmatism clearly offers an appropriate and useful way of approaching the dynamics of human conduct in social situations, there are still questions to answer about how to develop more relevant theories of organising, and how to conduct empirical work that engages more fully with the performative dimensions of social practice.

Recent theoretical developments include an article by Farjoun et al. (2015), which outlines an approach to new theory development that focusses specifically on Dewey's (1922[1957]) book, 'Human nature and conduct'. In so doing, the authors have acknowledged there is a task of translation to be undertaken in bringing Dewey's ideas alive in the domain of organisational theorising. Their argument is that through its recursive logic

and commitment to the emergent ephemerality of 'things', Pragmatism offers a fresh perspective on the dynamics of change and complexity in organisations, which is both richer and more realistic than alternative accounts drawn from rationalist and structuralist theories. To illustrate this point, they demonstrated how Pragmatist concepts may be used to address specific challenges in the organisation studies literature such as the agency/structure problem, and the boundary problems associated with defining conceptual categories. However, they also acknowledged that Pragmatism has even greater depths that, as yet, remain unplumbed by those organisational scholars questing for more dynamically informed theoretical ideas.

Whereas theoretical concepts offer ways of framing inquiries into the thinking/doing of situations, Pragmatism goes beyond this to seek a synthesis of theory with the radical empiricist possibilities of practice. It is in engaged practice that performative meanings are brought to life, shaping the ongoing continuity of social action. Empirical work in this performative tradition requires a close re-examination of all the usual methodological assumptions that we bring to bear in doing qualitative research, and in particular, it urges us to go beyond the static classifications and foundational assumptions of representationalism. In my own work, I have approached this problem by exploring the specific concepts that I have developed earlier in this chapter, but as sensitisations that influence my inquirer's gaze rather than as reductive theoretical constructs for elaboration. So for instance, Philippe Lorino and I have investigated the performance and implications of routines in the practical context of a manufacturing business that had recently introduced a computer-integrated manufacturing system (Simpson & Lorino, 2016). We accounted for an unfolding series of events by tracing the emergence and transformation of habits in a socially and temporally extensive process of inquiry. We identified the abductive turning points in this inquiry, probed the conversational dynamics

of thinking/doing and revealed the transactional engagements amongst the various actors, both human and material. Taking this approach allowed us to expand our thinking beyond the well-known surface features of Pragmatist philosophy to demonstrate how it works in practice, in particular developing more performative understandings of the particular situation of our inquiry. These understandings are, of course, embedded in the wider domain of Pragmatist thinking/doing, but they are given greater clarity by a sensitisation to key Pragmatist concepts.

Pragmatism's value to business and management studies is its particular resonance with questions relating to practice and process, where the field is still wide open to new inquiries and fresh insights. In my view, however, the potential for Pragmatism to inform practice research and management education is likely to remain fragmented and indistinct unless researchers are willing to engage a fresh methodological orientation that genuinely invites a theory/practice synthesis. In writing this chapter, I hope to invite adventurous inquirers to dive in and explore more of what Pragmatism may have to offer.

CLASSIC READINGS IN PRAGMATISM

- Peirce, C. S. (1877[1934]). The fixation of belief. In C. Hartshorne & P. Weiss (Eds) *Collected papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, Volume V Pragmatism and pragmatism*, pp. 223–47. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Peirce, C. S. (1878[1934]). How to make our ideas clear. In C. Hartshorne & P. Weiss (Eds) *Collected papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, Volume V Pragmatism and pragmatism*, pp. 248–71. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- James, W. (1907[1975]). What Pragmatism means. In *Pragmatism: A new name for some old ways of thinking*, Chapter 2. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 27–44.
- James, W. (1907[1975]). Pragmatism's conception of truth. In *Pragmatism: A new name for some old ways of thinking*, Chapter 6. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 95–114.
- Dewey, J. (1896[1972]). The reflex arc concept in psychology. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), *Early Works* (Vol. 5, pp. 96–109). Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Dewey, J. (1938[1986]). The pattern of inquiry, Chapter 6 of *Logic: The theory of inquiry*. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), *The later works, 1925–1953* (Vol. 12), pp. 105–122. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Mead, G. H. (1924/5). The genesis of the self and social control. *International Journal of Ethics*, 35(3), 251–77.
- Mead, G. H. (1929). The nature of the past. In *Essays in honor of John Dewey* (pp. 235–42). New York: Henry Holt and Co.

REFERENCES

- Aboulafia, M. (2001). *The cosmopolitan self: George Herbert Mead and continental philosophy*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Adler, S. P. & Obstfeld, D. (2007). The role of affect in creative projects and explorative search. *Industrial and Corporate Change*, 16(1), 19–50.
- Agar, M. (2010). On the ethnographic part of the mix: A multi-genre tale of the field. *Organizational Research Methods*, 13(2), 286–303.
- Arjaliès, D.-L., Lorino, P. & Simpson, B. (2013). American pragmatism and organization: Issues and controversies. In M. Kelemen & N. Rumens (Eds), *American pragmatism and organization: Issues and controversies* (pp. 131–45). Farnham, Surrey: Gower.
- Bernstein, R. J. (1972). *Praxis and action*. London: Duckworth.
- Bernstein, R. J. (2010). *The Pragmatic turn*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.
- Brandom, R. (1994). *Making it explicit: Reasoning, representing, and discursive commitment*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- Burrell, G. & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological paradigms and organisational analysis*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- Carlile, P. (2002). A pragmatic view of knowledge and boundaries: Boundary objects in new product development. *Organization Science*, 13(4), 442–55.
- Chesterton, G. K. (1908). *Orthodoxy*. New York: John Lane.
- Chia, R. (1995). From Modern to Postmodern organizational analysis. *Organization Studies*, 16(4), 579–604.
- Cohen, M. D. (2007). Reading Dewey: Reflections on the study of routine. *Organization Studies*, 28(5), 773–86.
- Dewey, J. (1896). The reflex arc concept in psychology. *Psychological Review*, 3(4), 357–70.
- Dewey, J. (1917). Duality and dualism. *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, 14(18), 491–3.
- Dewey, J. (1922/1957). Human nature and conduct. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), *Middle Works* (Volume 14). Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Dewey, J. (1938 [1986]). Logic: The theory of inquiry. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), *The later works, 1925–1953* (Volume 12). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Dewey, J. & Bentley, A. F. (1949[1960]). *Knowing and the known*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Dionysiou, D. D. & Tsoukas, H. (2013). Understanding the (Re)Creation of routines from within: A symbolic interactionist perspective. *Academy of Management. The Academy of Management Review*, 38(2), 181–205.
- Elkjaer, B. (2004). Organizational learning: The 'third way'. *Management Learning*, 35(4), 419–34.
- Elkjaer, B. & Simpson, B. (2011). Pragmatism: A lived and living philosophy. What can it offer to contemporary organization theory. *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, 32, 55–84.
- Emirbayer, M. (1997). Manifesto for a relational sociology. *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(2), 281–317.
- Farjoun, M., Ansell, C. & Boin, A. (2015). PERSPECTIVE—pragmatism in organization studies: Meeting the challenges of a dynamic and complex world. *Organization Science*, 26(6), 1787–1804.
- Follett, M. P. (1996). *Mary Parker Follett: Prophet of management: A celebration of writings from the 1920s*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Garud, R., Simpson, B., Langley, A. & Tsoukas, H. (2015). Introduction: How does novelty emerge? In R. Garud, B. Simpson, A. Langley & H. Tsoukas (Eds.), *Process research in organization studies: The emergence of novelty in organizations* (pp. 1–24). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Helin, J., Hernes, T., Hjorth, D. & Holt, R. (Eds.). (2014). *The Oxford handbook of process philosophy and organization studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- James, W. (1890 [1952]). *Principles of psychology*. Chicago, IL: Encyclopedia Britannica.
- James, W. (1912 [2006]). *Essays in radical empiricism*. London: Longmans, Green and Company.
- Jarzabkowski, P. & Paul Spee, A. (2009). Strategy-as-practice: A review and future directions for the field. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 11(1), 69–95.
- Joas, H. (1993). *Pragmatism and social theory*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Joas, H. (1996). *Creativity of action*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Latour, B. (1986). The powers of association. In J. Law (Ed.), *Power, action and belief* (pp. 264–80). London: Routledge.
- Locke, K., Golden-Biddle, K. & Feldman, M. S. (2008). Perspective—making doubt generative: Rethinking the role of doubt in the research process. *Organization Science*, 19(6), 907–18.
- Lorimer, H. (2005). Cultural geography: The busyness of being 'more-than-representational'. *Progress in Human Geography*, 29(1), 83–94.
- Lovejoy, A. O. (1908). *The thirteen pragmatisms*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Mantere, S. & Ketokivi, M. (2013). Reasoning in organization science. *Academy of Management Review*, 38(1), 70–89.
- Martela, F. (2015). Fallible inquiry with ethical ends-in-view: A pragmatist philosophy of science for organizational research. *Organization Studies*, 36(4), 537–63.

- Mead, G. H. (1925). The genesis of the self and social control. *International Journal of Ethics*, 35(3), 251–77.
- Mead, G. H. (1932). *The philosophy of the present*. La Salle, IL: Open Court.
- Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self and society*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Mead, G. H. (1938). *The philosophy of the act*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Menand, L. (2001). *The metaphysical club*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Miettinen, R. (2000). The concept of experiential learning and John Dewey's theory of reflective thought and action. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 19(1), 54–72.
- Nicolini, D., Gherardi, S. & Yanow, D. (Eds.). (2003). *Knowing in organizations: A practice-based approach*. London and New York: M.E. Sharpe.
- Nooteboom, B. (2012). A pragmatist theory of innovation. In H. Melkas and V. Haarmakorpi (Eds.), *Practice-based innovation: Insights, applications and policy implications* (pp. 17–27). Heidelberg, Berlin: Springer.
- Ormerod, R. (2006). The history and ideas of pragmatism. *Journal of the Operational Research Society*, 57(8), 892–909.
- Peirce, C. S. (1878). How to make our ideas clear. *The Popular Science Monthly*, 12(January 1878), 286–302.
- Peirce, C. S. (1965). *Collected papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Powell, T. C. (2001). Competitive advantage: Logical and philosophical considerations. *Strategic Management Journal*, 22(9), 875–88.
- Powell, T. C. (2002). The philosophy of strategy. *Strategic Management Journal*, 23(9), 873–80.
- Putnam, H. (1990). *Realism with a human face* (J. Conant Ed.). Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press.
- Raelin, J. A. (Ed.). (2016). *Leadership-as-practice: Theory and application*. New York: Routledge.
- Rorty, R. (1980). *Philosophy and the mirror of nature*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Rosenthal, S., Hausman, C. R. & Anderson, D. R. (Eds.). (1999). *Classical American Pragmatism: Its contemporary vitality*. Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Rumens, N. & Kelemen, M. (2010). American pragmatism and feminism: Fresh opportunities for sociological inquiry. *Contemporary Pragmatism*, 7(1), 129–48.
- Sebeok, T. A. & Umiker-Sebeok, J. (1988). 'You know my method': A juxtaposition of Charles S. Peirce and Sherlock Holmes. In U. Eco & T. A. Sebeok (Eds.), *Dupin, Holmes, Peirce: The sign of three* (pp. 11–54). Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Shields, P. M. (2003). The community of inquiry: Classical pragmatism and public administration. *Administration & Society*, 35(5), 510–38.
- Simpson, B. (2009). Pragmatism, Mead, and the practice turn. *Organization Studies*, 30(12), 1329–47.
- Simpson, B. (2014). George Herbert Mead. In J. Helin, T. Hernes, D. Hjorth & R. Holt (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of process philosophy and organization studies* (pp. 272–86). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Simpson, B. (2016). Where's the agency in Leadership-as-Practice? In J. A. Raelin (Ed.), *Leadership-as-practice: Theory and application* (pp. 160–77). New York: Routledge.
- Simpson, B. & Lorino, P. (2016). Re-viewing routines theory through a Pragmatist lens. In J. Howard-Grenville, C. Rerup, A. Langley & H. Tsoukas (Eds.), *Process research in organization studies: Organizational routines – How they are created, maintained, and changed* (Volume 6, pp. 44–70). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Steyaert, C. (2007). 'Entrepreneurship' as a conceptual attractor? A review of process theories in 20 years of entrepreneurship studies. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 19(6), 453–77.
- Talisse, R. B., & Aikin, S. F. (2008). *Pragmatism: A guide for the perplexed*. London & New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Watson, T. J. (2010). Critical social science, pragmatism and the realities of HRM. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 21(6), 915–31.
- Wicks, A. C. & Freeman, R. E. (1998). Organization studies and the new pragmatism: Positivism, anti-positivism, and the search for ethics. *Organization Science*, 9(2), 123–40.
- Winter, S. (2013). Habit, deliberation, and action: Strengthening the microfoundations of routines and capabilities. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 27(2), 120–37.

Critical Management Studies

Wharerata Writing Group¹

Li Min is a Chinese national studying in New Zealand.² To make ends meet she has held numerous part-time jobs in the hospitality and retail sectors where she has been sexually harassed, bullied, unpaid, poorly paid and illegally paid by various employers. Her experiences have led her to work voluntarily for the 'unite' union and lately she has been picketing Burger King Restaurants over their zero hours contracts (Treen, 2015).

Li is considering applying for a scholarship to study for a PhD in management. She is keen to see her studies contribute to addressing the problems she has encountered in her part-time work experiences. Her contact at the university's school of management has suggested she look for inspiration for her research project in some of the influential traditions that inform the critical study of management.

INTRODUCTION

The *critical* study of management begins with questions about the purpose of inquiry

and, particularly, whom research is in aid of. In some instances, critical study also attempts to change the conditions of organized life that are in question. Marx's popular aphorism that the job of 'philosophers' – whom we take to be all those deeply concerned with *the conditions* by which we live – is to change as well as understand the world, offers important historical steerage. In the spirit of Marx's words, our contribution to this volume maps the influential qualitative research traditions in the critical study of organizations and management *and* sets out how these traditions attempt to challenge and change the conditions they study. We do this from the perspective of a student, Li Min, who, as the brief narrative above notes, is about to set out on PhD studies.

In what follows, we discuss how Li Min's research work would be located in contemporary forms of five key traditions of critical study of management. We offer brief methodological and axiological guidance in each case. Our format borrows from Marta

Calás and Linda Smircich's influential chapter on feminist analysis in *The SAGE Handbook of Organization Studies* (2006) and from Prichard et al.'s presentation of the methodological choices available to those undertaking organizational discourse analysis (2009). Where our chapter differs is that as well as discussing the *mode of inquiry* that Li Min might adopt if she were to embrace each of the traditions, we also discuss the *mode of influence* that that tradition might suggest.

There are many potential research trajectories in each tradition. Given the space constraints, we have attempted to locate Li Min's work in *contemporary examples* of each of our five traditions, which are: Marxism, postcolonialism, discourse theory, psychodynamics and feminism. Each section begins with a short paragraph that adds a few extra details surrounding Li Min's PhD project and introduces the broad priorities and commitments of each tradition's mode of inquiry before locating the work alongside a key contemporary example. We conclude the chapter with a discussion of the various subjects positions the critical 'philosopher' of management and organizations might occupy when in search of both illumination and the reconstruction of the object of critical study.

FROM DIVERSE ECONOMIES TO ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF ORGANIZING: LI MIN GOES TO THE FREE FOOD STORE

Researcher's Location

Li Min's part-time work exposed her, in intimate detail, to the insecure working conditions and exploitative class relations of the food and retail sector. This led Li Min on a search for alternative forms of exchange relations, economic processes and organizing forms. A friend recommended she visit a

free food store in the Manawatu. Significantly different to a food bank and normal food shops or retailers, the free store is a charity organization that gives away surplus food donated by retailers and cafes to everyone who comes to the shop. The free store seemed to Li Min a very interesting example of an alternative form of organizing based around food (re)distribution. She wondered about the organizational and social dynamics of this example of alternative economic organizing as well as its transformative impact. She decided to volunteer as a worker for the free store and the organization agreed to let her study it as a research topic for her PhD.

Considering the deadlocks and unsustainability of dominant forms of organizing in neoliberal capitalist economies, there is an ongoing but growing interest among critical scholars in alternative forms, such as cooperatives, social movement organizations and even communes (Parker et al., 2014). Within this field, Li's study needed to question the nature and formation of exchange relations, and (re)distribution processes, and to understand how alternatives can co-exist in a capitalist economy alongside its tensions and contradictions. In what follows, we assume that Li Min took the diverse economies framework as the entry point for her PhD and decided to do a *critical ethnography* of this free store. Her purpose was to understand and contribute to the development of non-capitalist economies and we now set out the priorities and commitments she took from this approach.

Diverse Economies Framework

Capitalism is an economic system based on private accumulation to capital of the surpluses realized through commodity-based production and market exchange. As is rather obvious, capitalism is global and directly and indirectly shapes much of our lives and the planet upon which we depend. It

underwrites childhood and child rearing (Langer, 2002), shapes how we experience time (Smith, 2015), orchestrates the nature of our learning (Olsen, 2006) and organizes how we come to earn a living (Willis, 1977). It's easy to think of capitalism as a totally inclusive economic system; a system where lives involve a series of movements from one opportunity for capitalist exploitation to another. However, the more we assume that our economic relations are fully maintained by capitalist dynamics, the more we are stuck with the assumption of the unity, singularity and totality of capitalist hegemony (Gibson-Graham, 1996).

One consequence of such an assumption is that only 'way out', if imagined at all, is through some dramatic overthrowing of capitalism, in some hoped-for class war. Most activists and social scientists regard this as utopian fantasy (Graeber, 2012). Prominent among the group are the post-structuralist economic geographer Gibson-Graham. In their 1996 book, *The End of Capitalism (as we knew it)*, they argue that the job of the social scientist (PhD students like Li Min, for example) is to challenge *the discourse of capitalism*. Such work involves revealing the signifiers (meaning systems that structure our assumptions) that the discourse of capitalism needs to function, but which are carefully forgotten. The discourse of capitalism, for example, requires, and often forgets, family labour, public services and the long history of cooperative organizing, where *people's lives* are the purpose of economic relations rather than simply the source of surplus for capital. For Gibson-Graham, it is this capital-o-centricism that has the effect of making non-capitalist economic processes (cooperatives, family work, public goods, etc.) marginal and peripheral (Gibson-Graham, 1996, pp. 253–9).

This approach is significantly different from other Marxian-inspired theoretical positions in the critical study of organizations and management. The labour process tradition (Braverman, 1974; Cushen and Thompson,

2016), for example, is mostly concerned with the political processes within capitalist corporations.

Gibson-Graham followed up their deconstructive analysis of the discourse of capitalism with their work *A postcapitalist politics* (Gibson-Graham, 2006), where they set researchers and activists the challenge of demonstrating how non-capitalist activities co-exist alongside capitalist activities in order to (re)think, (re)imagine and (re)create performative alternatives that serve the needs of communities.

So, what kind of critique of capitalism is this and what kind of research practice does it suggest? The authors argue that a diverse economies framework is simply a technology that 'reconstitutes the ground upon which we can perform a different economy' (Gibson-Graham, 2008, p. 619). It is unashamedly an example of 'weak theory' that 'contains minimal critical content'. But what Gibson-Graham suggest is a *politics of possibility* for searching and enacting alternatives rather than simply negating and resisting what is given to us as 'Capitalism'. For instance, by analysing the free labour of academics and subscription fees in the capitalist industry of publishing journal articles, as communities of scholars we can search or enact non-capitalist alternatives based on open access articles, online journals, cooperative models or open review policies to perform our scholarship as examples of non-capitalist labour, enterprise, transaction and property.

Transformative Effects

The purpose of this critical theoretical framework is quite simply to challenge and change the hegemonic presumptions about the economic system that surrounds us. In Gibson-Graham's own words, this 'involves making credible those diverse practices that satisfy needs, regulate consumption, generate surplus, and maintain and expand the commons, so that community economies in which

interdependence between people and environments is ethically negotiated can be recognized now and constructed in the future' (Gibson-Graham, 2008, p. 623).

Gibson-Graham's projects often involve participatory action research (see Gibson-Graham, 2006, Chapters 6 and 7). In Li Min's case, a critical ethnographic approach might be used (see Ybema et al., 2009), where the aim is to challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions shaping social relations, meanings and identities in the given organizational context and, if possible, to transform organizational and social relations by acknowledging the central role of actors and asking 'what could be rather than what is' (Jordan & Yeomans, 1995; Nyberg & Delaney, 2014).

In the case of the free food store, it may be neither an ideal/model organization, nor a pure non-capitalist organization. While the store is an example of non-capitalist communal charity enterprise, it relies on the donations from retailers of over-produced food. While analysis of the free store highlights the over-production and waste at the core of capitalist consumerist society, and the development of responsible business practice by some retailers, the free gifting of surplus food through volunteer labour also helps us to rethink capitalist labour and exchange relations. Normal relations involve wages for labour and money for commodities. The free food store shows how differences can develop in opposition to common assumptions and practices. Thus, as a part of diverse economy, studying a free store may have various outcomes for transformative potential, such as reconsidering and experimenting with the roots and terms of the capitalist economic processes including marginal cost, economies of scale, waste, profit, consumption, surplus and distribution. In the process, such research might help to contribute to changing exchange relations in the capitalist economy that fit the needs of the community and support alternative political and ethical agendas (See Gibson-Graham et al., 2013; Cameron & Healy, 2013).

LI MIN AND POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

If the above strand of contemporary Marxism sends Li Min on a search for alternatives to capitalist organizations, then Postcolonial theory sends Li Min on a search for a new form of *global subjectivity*. For this tradition, capitalism is one part of a world constituted under colonialism, initially at least in the name of a 'civilising mission' through ideological hegemony and violence. Much of this tradition remains. Many argue that since the Second World War, with its world policies of development and modernization, our subjectivity has been shaped by the discourses of globalization and the project of multiculturalism (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988; Escobar, 1995).

Such discourses could be said to govern Li Min's life. They make her relocate from China to New Zealand, to pursue education under the authentic English curriculum, almost essential for the career she is hoping to secure. They make her subject to the detailed immigration rules imposed on a student visa and, consequently, she fears becoming 'illegal'; she is unwilling to report exploitative employers and more readily accepts work on a cash basis. But this does not necessarily mean that Li Min is being *defined* by this subjection. Her work on the Burger King protest brought her into contact with other students, and together they formed a group aiming to support international students involved in employment disputes.³ But the question for her was how to develop a research topic around such concerns?

Li Min's PhD research is inspired by postcolonial theory. It problematizes our relations to *specific spaces* and locates *our-selves in historical, social and cultural conditions*. In other words, postcolonialism problematizes identity, subjectivity and agency. Particularly, it works with those who – through the discursive practices of the West (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988) – were once homogenized as 'Others'

(non-Western) and categorized as fixed and incomplete, but who are now ‘speaking back’ (Calás & Smircich, 2006, p. 317).

This is not to assume that colonial conditions have ended. Colonial hegemonies continue in real-life politics, in economic relations with the surpluses of far-flung global value chains accumulated by the West – rather than the rest – and around the politics of knowledge (cf. Ahmad, 1995; Awatere, 1984; Foly, 2011).

Subaltern Postcolonial Studies

So, what kind of speaking back is possible and what kind of research practice does this involve? Some scholars (Bhabha, 1994) point to the hybrid responses to neo-colonial economic and epistemological domination; others are less certain and point to ambivalence and mimicry as expressions of the mind-set of the colonized. Celebrated post-colonial scholar Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argues that for the colonized, the ‘subalterns’, their political agency needs to be associated with dominant groups; therefore, homogenizing factors of identifications become essential for them. She concludes that subalterns cannot represent themselves (1988; cf. Mir & Mir, 2014).

According to subaltern studies, cultural differences and institutionally produced divisions such as ‘citizen’, ‘immigrant’ and ‘refugee’, are inherent features of social relations of postcolonial states. Therefore, the collective identity of subalterns (colonized workers, for example) emerges as a category or community in response to everyday cosmopolitan politics of life (Chakrabarty, 1989; Guha, 1989). This line of inquiry is concerned with theorizing communities’ actions and alternative discourse. Drawing from this perspective, the researcher is drawn to work on how solidarity and political action by the colonized is constituted – such as with the Unite Burger King protest mentioned above – and other areas where deviations from conventional

subordination are located. This work thus challenges Spivak’s assertion and shows that the subaltern, the colonized, can (actually) speak.⁴

Transnational Postcolonialism

Alternatively, Li Min might turn to Transnational postcolonial theory. This locates the colonized subject as a series of factions, such as: indigenous communities, immigrants, refugees, undocumented people living in border areas and precariat workers. Li Min and other international students fall into this category. As temporary immigrants, they work and pay taxes, which implies they are in active relations with the state and business (Mir & Mir, 2014). Such a ‘factions’ approach would explore the politics of multiculturalism of neoliberalism, with its politics of multiplicities of locations and entities – local, national, regional, and global, as well as state and stateless condition – and how both interact with class, gender, race, ethnicity and sex – social sub categories – within the axis of a single global economic regime. Such an approach would investigate the interplay of neoliberal regimes and how they impose gradations on individuals’ status. Such work might address the differentials in the agency and vulnerability of particular groups; for example, women as contingent workers (Brah, 1993; Calás & Smircich, 2006; Chio 2005; Holvino, 2010; Ong 1987). Transnationalism claims that an international division of labour is entangled with the issues of gradation of citizenship rights and flexible citizenship. Evidence of this is found in the conditions of workers employed in the Special Economic Zone in the case of the South, or, for example, employees recruited from Asia in the USA’s Silicon Valley (Ong, 2006). Workers employed in a global fast-food chain, for example, are in a similar situation.

In that sense, Li Min might connect her work situation with that of the suicides among workers at Foxconn iPhone factories

located in the Special Economic Zone of Shenzhen province in China. But Li Min's actions in forming an International Students Committee, and thus taking part in political society, allow some redefinition of active relations with the state and business, both locally and globally, and theorize such work as forms of multiple location resistance (Escobar, 2011).

Research Strategies and Transformational Effects

Such traditions of theorization suggest research strategies and tactics that involve close investigation and political action *with* subordinated groups. Inevitably, they suggest ethnographic and action research strategies with the purpose of creating transformational effects for those involved. In other words, the purpose of such research is to support the agency of the subaltern/colonized with a primary focus on interrogating and challenging ideological constructions and highlighting and expressing resistance. While such performative research might not, in and of itself, redefine the cultural logic of global capitalism, it may bear productively on individuals' mobility and on their scope for making legitimate claims. Moreover, it might, perhaps, help to create conditions for the emergence of new legal norms of global citizenship. But more immediate effects are also possible. Li Min's demonstration as a casual worker exposed her to union politics, and through this to the strength of collective organization. The formation of the aspiring Committee for International Students might highlight for her that fragmented individuals can be coordinated, globally linked and able to translate their individual agendas into a collective one. Zapatista movements and the actions of South Korean farmers during the WTO (World Trade Organization) summit in Hong Kong are examples. These movements are now globally connected; their organization strategy is understood to involve translocal

groups (Banerjee, 2011) and highlights the process of defining globalization from below. But even more local effects are possible. Postcolonial theory and its research strategies offer insights into how we are subjects of political and economic systems within the contextual realities of neo-global order; how our labour is exploited and how our voices become repressed by such order. This exploration of the individual's formation as a subject of subordinating orders is at the core of our next, and linked, critical perspective.

LI MIN AS SUBJECT AND AGENT OF DISCOURSE

Li Min is an Asian woman. She is a migrant retail worker who has been bullied, harassed and exploited. Turning to the work of French social theorist Michel Foucault can help Li Min understand that her experiences are not merely bad luck but, rather, a 'logical' consequence of her placement in the categories 'Asian', 'woman', 'migrant' and 'retail worker' – a cluster of categories which, as presently constructed, demand of her a mode of being in which subservience to others is routinely expected and through which she is readily positioned as an 'easy' target of abusive treatment. Foucault offers Li Min methods and concepts for interrogating this process of categorization and its effects, from which opportunities for change can be identified.

A Foucauldian approach enables us to question whatever is claimed to be true, right and proper about the world. Knowledge itself is the object of Foucauldian analysis and this is understood as being imbued with power such that to interrogate (or claim) knowledge is, simultaneously, to interrogate (or claim) power (Foucault, 1980). Deploying this approach, claims to speak the truth can be examined for their assumptions, processes of formation, underpinning rules and for the effects that discourses of truth generate for our sense of self, how we are to relate to

others and how society is to be arranged (see Foucault, 1977, 1978, 1985). Viewed through a Foucauldian lens, then, we may understand Li Min to be subjected to those particular discourses that claim to speak the truth about what it is to be 'Asian', 'woman', 'migrant' and 'retail worker' and, rather than treating these categories as self-evident truths, they become the focus of our inquiry.

Deploying Foucault, whenever we encounter something which is said to be 'true', 'right' or 'proper', we shall understand this as a social construction. We cannot assume that there exists some objective, certain connection between what we encounter in the world and the knowledge/truth that exists in relation to that. Rather, it is the discourses that we call on to account for our experiences which continuously bring reality into being, through and in the very accounts we give of it, a process which simultaneously has the effect of denying or limiting other possible realities (Foucault, 1972, 1977).

Consequently, what is routinely claimed as being true in respect to the category of persons defined as (i.e. constructed as) 'Asian', for example, forms a discursive regime which constructs reality. This regime has a history that can be examined, exposing how it has been shaped and developed over time, and identifying whose and what interests are served during the formulation of this category of being at any given point in time. In a New Zealand context, this could involve Li Min investigating official documents about immigration policy and procedure, and looking for change and continuity in the criteria governing entry – how 'Asian' is defined, what social function the policy serves and what demands are made of those subjected to it.

Discourses also rely on assumptions and underpinning rules which govern what they regard as appropriate and relevant, and these can be interrogated. They deploy a grammar of terms and definitions that can be unpicked to expose gaps, contradictions, requirements and expectations. The discourse of 'Asian', in the New Zealand context, makes claims

about what it is to be 'Asian', the habits of mind, of demeanour, of self-hood and of relating to others which it expects of those it speaks of. These are also matters which can be interrogated, thereby drawing attention to what possibilities for being are afforded and prescribed by this discourse. To explore these dimensions of discourse, Li Min could go beyond official documents and explore everyday talk about or by 'Asians' and draw out from this talk its underpinning assumptions, rules and requirements for being.

Importantly, for Foucault, discourse is not simply talk and text. It also includes social practices which both give effect to and inform what is being accounted for in talk and text, and can therefore be found in institutional routines and bodily practices (1972, 1977). As a retail worker, then, Li Min is expected to adopt prescribed ways of talking to customers and preparing their food; techniques likely written into training manuals and which a trainer has then used to verbally instruct Li Min on those dimensions of what it is 'to be' a 'good employee'. As she goes about her work, she enacts and embodies that very discourse, she has that discourse inscribed upon her bodily movements (Foucault, 1977). Discourses are, thus, highly productive in the sense that they have many effects: Li Min is simultaneously the subject of, is subjectivated by, is subject to and disciplined by the discourse of what it is to be a 'good employee'. What Foucault proposes is that by analysing discourses and their processes of development, we can come to understand how it is that we have been constructed into being who and what we are. From this analysis we can begin to make choices for ourselves as to who and what we wish to become (e.g. Foucault, 1985).

Discourses, then, construct social reality and our sense of self; what is said and what is intelligibly sayable provides the ways in which we categorize, explain and seek to act in the world and form our very selves (e.g. Foucault, 1985). This can be read to imply that discourses are determinative of

what we can think, say and be (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000). Contra this, however, Foucauldian analyses also demonstrate that whatever is constituted by a given discourse as 'reality' or 'my self' remains open to change through exposing the very process of reality construction as one which is social, and hence neither natural nor inevitable (e.g. Foucault, 1977, 1978). Moreover, wherever power is found, so too is resistance (Foucault, 1980). Foucault's efforts show us, then, that through understanding the discourses which inform our experiences we become empowered to craft alternative frames of action, sense-making and subjectivity, an ethical process which Foucault understood as 'care of the self' (e.g. Foucault, 1985, 1986, 2008). In Li Min's case, through examining the discourses which generate expectations for her as 'Asian', 'woman', 'migrant' and 'retail worker', she can identify opportunities to craft a self that is shaped by those elements of these discourses which she sees as productive, setting aside those which she sees as problematic. Other discourses of 'care', 'equality' and 'respect' can also be called on in this process of crafting a self that is not merely an object of discourse.

Foucault developed two methods of inquiry for examining discourse. The first, 'archaeology', comprises two components. First, it analyses what has been claimed to be 'the truth' of a topic, paying particular attention to the assumptions and effects of those claims for our sense of self and for relations between persons (e.g. Foucault, 1970, 1972). Second, it postulates the underlying 'structure of thought', or episteme, which make it possible for those 'truths' to be considered intelligible and plausible at the time they arose, even if they later came to seem nonsensical (Foucault, 1972, p. 191). Archaeology thus seeks to identify and analyse the form of a set of claims to know the truth, a form which has two levels: that of particular truths about a specific topic, and that of the general truth, which underpins and governs all truths in a given period.

Foucault's second (and complementary) method, genealogy, ranges more widely, looking to the social context in which discourses develop, identifying connections between what was seen as problematic at a given point in time and how discourses which claim to speak the truth form in response to these perceived problems (Cummings & Bridgman, 2011; Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983). Genealogy involves examining the networks of relationships, strategies and tactics that have facilitated certain ideas and practices coming to the fore (e.g. Foucault, 1977, 1978). Power is central to such an analysis (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983). Attention is paid to how social practices emerge and develop to shape who we are, and how power relations influence the ways people use and experience their selves and their bodies (e.g. Foucault, 1977, 1978, 1980). Whatever effects or ways of being are created, constrained or disciplined in some way in a given discourse, and whatever is held up in that discourse as laudable or abominable, are matters of particular interest in a genealogical analysis. It examines both the effects of a given discourse on persons and interpersonal relationships and how this situation developed (e.g. Foucault, 1977, 1978).

Foucauldian discourse analysis can examine a wide variety of talk/text/practices and the focus of analytic effort can attend to whatever is the subject of a given discourse. Combining archaeology and genealogy, attention can contribute to understanding what the categories and terms of a given discourse routinely imply; the assumptions embedded in such categorizations; how these categories are called on to justify certain actions and practices; their effects for our sense of self; and how those categories have emerged and developed over time.

Examining the everyday language use of individuals to identify patterns and themes in how the issues under examination are framed and justified could be another approach. The analysis could consider how claims about

what is 'right', 'true' and 'proper' are presented and justified, seeking to identify the unwritten, unstated, implicit 'rules' that govern what is said. Any subject positions generated in such talk could be examined for their claimed characteristics, rights, duties, powers and limitations.

The Foucauldian discourse analyst can also turn to official texts, accounts given by experts and institutional sources, tracing developments in the discourse over time. From this, the analyst may identify not only the form of a given discourse but also how it came to be instituted and regularized into rules, procedures, laws, practices, norms and routines, enabling measurement, training and enforcement, all of which function to create disciplined ways of being.

Foucauldian discourse analysis, then, offers multiple routes for a critical examination of what is routinely taken for granted about what is real, true, right and proper. Foucault's methods of inquiry, and his conceptual apparatus, offer a fertile means of interrogating what are otherwise commonly accepted and sanctioned ways of talking and acting, revealing how what we take as 'reality' and our 'self' has been socially constructed and is thus open to change. In Li Min's case, this kind of analysis offers insight into the systemic forces shaping her experience and will aid in the development of ideas for how to challenge these. And one of the ways in which we might challenge these forces is to change the academic discourse in which we become located as researchers and the researched.

LI MIN ENGAGES THE PSYCHOANALYTIC TRADITION

Dear Li, please excuse us. In this segment we speak to you in the first person. Our reasons for this will become clear, but suffice to say we switch here from the familiar third person academic voice, the voice and

position of the university (as we will discuss below), to the first person to simulate, at least, the critical psychoanalytic tradition's commitment to engagement and empowerment of the other.

We imagine that you are thinking that psychoanalysis might seem an odd place to look for a critical approach to organizations and management. It is most often understood in our society as being 'useful' only in the clinical setting. So how can something that happens between a therapist and a patient help us dig into the underside of organizational life? One way to answer this question is to first put aside, for a moment, 'the organization' as institution, and replace it with 'the relationship', or rather what we would call the 'social bond'. So, instead of organizing/organization, we have the social bond between, for example, the therapist and patient, the teacher and the student, the manager and the workers; between the master and the resistant slave. We have the bond between any two people and between the self and the other. These are the places where a 'social bond' resides (Malone, 2008).

In this critical organizational analysis of social bonds, psychoanalysis is an important theoretical resource. It is a resource that has been appropriated in the study of organizations and management since at least the mid-twentieth century – famously with the classical tradition of the Tavistock Institute (Jones & Spicer, 2005, p. 228) – and most recently, and perhaps this is now the dominant form of *critical* organizational analysis, from the Lacanian psychoanalytic tradition (cf. Arnaud, 2002; Contu & Driver et al., 2010; Costas & Taheri, 2012). So, rather than survey all the various critical psychoanalytic traditions, we focus here on this now very prominent Lacanian tradition. In particular, we focus on what we regard as the summation of Jacques Lacan's work on the social bond found in his presentation of 'the four discourses'.

Lacan introduced the 'four discourses' during a seminar series he gave in 1969 and

1970 – the series was entitled *The other side of psychoanalysis* (Lacan, 2007) – where he sought to theorize the dominant organizing social bonds of the current epoch through his lens as a psychoanalyst. Lacan proposed four discourses, and thus four social bonds: the master, university, hysteric and analyst.

In what follows I am going to position you, Li, as ‘the hysteric’ and myself as, in sequence, the master, university, analyst. Through this, hopefully, we will have a chance to talk about some of the other influential traditions but also, and more importantly perhaps, to practice the technique of psychoanalytic inquiry – to demonstrate the practicability of its questioning nature – and to explore its mode of influence. But to understand Lacan’s critical form of organizational psychoanalysis, we need to go back to Freud.

Le maître (*The Master*)

Freud is the master of psychoanalysis; this is an indisputable fact. His discovery, the unconscious, revolutionized our understanding of individual human suffering and the malaise of civilization (Freud, 1976; Freud & Strachey, 1962). It is impossible to understand human relationships without recognizing the role of the unconscious, in his view, and if you try, you are only tinkering on the conscious surface. But Freud had his problems, the biggest being his structural biological determinism (think penis envy and infantile sexuality). But this was resolved through the ‘turn to language’ that swept the social sciences in the 1960s and 1970s (Parker, 1989). Jacques Lacan picked up Freud and re-birthed his theory through a post-structural lens. So, the first step into Lacan’s critical psychoanalysis of organization/bonds, is through his seventeenth seminar, *The other side of psychoanalysis*. Lacan’s ability to trace the (post-)structural foundations of the social bonds that hold us

relationally together gives us a structure for critical analysis. The four discourses, which might be your chapters entitled the master, the university, the hysteric and the analyst, may well offer up some ‘Truth’ that resides on, if you like, the ‘Other Side’ of your research question.

Li: Professor, what am I to you? Am I just a recruit? Someone to discipline with your truth? This Lacan doesn’t sound like he knows me, does he understand what I need? What I demand? What I desire? Do you? What am I to you? (Note: Li, being quick to grasp the nuance of the engagement, has effortlessly adopted the position of the hysteric).

L’Université (author as the university):

Perhaps I didn’t adequately cover your options. To be fair, seminar 17 is only one of more than 20 seminars, and then there is the *Ecrits* (Lacan, 1977) and many other vitally important texts. You should read widely throughout the oeuvre of Lacan and his interpreters, and particularly become intimate with the registers RSI (Real, Symbolic, Imaginary), desire, jouissance and of course the *objet a* (see Copjec, 1994; Grigg, 2008; and Žizek, 1990 for a range of positions on these devices) and the intricate twists and turns of the psychoanalytic process and how it has become something of note for the field of management and organization studies. How it enables us to reveal the emptiness of certain signifiers (Jones & Spicer, 2005); how organizations operate at a symbolic level (Arnaud, 2002); how the imaginary register creates disciplining regimes (Roberts, 2005); how Lacan can help us understand burnout (Vanheule et al., 2003); how choice is an elaborate and dangerous fantasy (Fotaki, 2007); and, importantly, how the Lacanian lack is implicated in identity formation (Driver, 2009). But this is just scratching the surface; there is also all the important work building on Lacan’s later work, including his famous twentieth seminar, *Encore*. Here you can delve into the theory of sexualization, discover the difference between phallic and feminine *jouissance* (Dickson, 2011; Fotaki & Harding, 2012) and consider the dark side of passion (Kenny, 2010).

But I haven’t even begun to introduce your other psychoanalytic options – what some might call the ‘Freudians’ – those who remain close to Freud’s original work, or follow Melanie Klein’s interpretations of Freud. Of particular note here is Manfred Kets de Vries and colleagues’ work on

the psyche of the entrepreneur and executive (1985, 1993, 1991), Michael Diamond's excellent book *The unconscious life of organizations* (1993) and Yiannis Gabriel's works – including on happy families (1999) and his book with colleagues *Organizations in depth: the psychoanalysis of organizations* (Gabriel et al. 1999). Contrasting Lacan's rather oblique style is Melanie Klein's object relations theory. To gauge the importance of this, I would suggest Stephen Frosh's excellent text *The politics of psychoanalysis* (1987).

That should provide you with a better grounding – your next stop is the library. I believe you have (at least) 11 books and many more journal articles to read.

Li: *Thank you Professor! That's an enormous amount of reading. But, really, how close does this bring me to formulating a research question? Do you really think that the psychoanalyst has it all figured out? Do you really think that if I learn the details of the theory and its method I will be able to theorize my suffering in a helpful (maybe even cathartic) way? Or are your motivations less pure than they seem? Will I write for you, sir? What am I to you?*

L'analyste (The Analyst)

The job of the critical student is the job of the hysteric. To be a relentless 'pain in the backside' for the various hierarchical structures they encounter; to never stop challenging the doctrine; and to refuse the assimilation of the university. This is what psychoanalysis offers. It is heaving with theoretical density, and encumbered with impregnable terminology and obscure concepts. It erects playgrounds in the dark space between the material and the philosophical. It asks the questions others repress. But all this only works if the hysteric is in charge – in other words it only works if the student never fails to ask the question of the university: what am I to you? The danger, of course, is that when the student approaches the psychoanalytically minded university researcher, the researcher attempts to enrol the student into 'their' symbolic register – how can the academy be analytical? Perhaps

it does all start with hysteria (Alakavuklar et al., 2016)?

Li: *[we do not get to see how Li responded to this section as the analyst would never directly intervene with the signifiers of their symbolic. The analyst must suppress their supposed 'knowledge' of Li's symptom and instead make room for Li to position them as the object of desire].*

Final Note from the Author

Above, we have attempted to apply one of the critical Freudian traditions (Lacanian psychoanalysis and particularly the four discourses) as a research framework. The key point is that it problematizes the very process of research, the form of critical knowledge and the agent of that knowledge. Within this tradition, the various questions of 'research strategies' and 'modes of influence', as always, are set with the four discourses. In other words, Li Min's research strategies, from the position of the hysteric at least, will be those that resist, challenge and pour sand into the gears of the dominant (masterly/fatherly?) research traditions of the university (e.g. positivism, constructivism, interpretivism). If, however, we locate Li Min's work in the discourse of the analyst, her research and its 'transformational effects' involve up-ending the subject's (whomever that might be) unconscious chains of signifiers, and replacing them with a revised (and one would hope more bearable and emancipatory) set of signifiers; a new, unspoken code that organizes the subject's desire. This is not to say that the other traditions (Freudian and Kleinian particularly) are not equally (or more!) useful in this regard. Remember: resist the doctrine!

LI MIN (FEMINISM)

The bullying, harassment, underpayment, poor payment and in some cases no payment

that Li Min confronted in a string of seemingly disastrous casual retail and hospitality jobs led her, inevitably, to two questions. First, was there a more lucrative and reliable way for a young Chinese woman to support her studies? Second, did she have these experiences because she signified as a 'woman' and 'foreign'? Did the combination of these two inevitably position her as subordinate and exploitable? She pondered these points, sipping tea and watching a group of her well-heeled male contemporaries at the next table tease each other over the relative size and power rating of their cars and computers. They, it seemed, did not have the same problems. But her academic advisers, who had been priming her to do a feminist critique of foreign women workers in New Zealand, were themselves rather split on the question of inevitability. Citing Marianna Fotaki (2011), an exponent of psychoanalytic feminism, one had proclaimed that 'phallogocentric discourse' was the enemy of women and men.

We are dealing with a deep *cultural unconscious* organized around the phallus, the symbolic penis, Fotaki claims. What women confront is not men as a class – who systematically and explicitly orchestrate a regime of oppression, a patriarchy – but rather a symbolic and unconscious structure that organizes and confirms the power of 'the Boss', 'the team leader', the 'father', and hierarchical management relations more generally. Power, in this sense, is not built on the threat of violence or the removal of rewards, but on the unconscious *significance* given to various linked terms and concepts that link back to a core signifier (the phallus). It is the universality and strength of this 'phallogocentric order', as Li Min had become aware, that gives men permission to enact what seemed to her a kind of sexualized domination of women in workplaces.

But how would it be possible to 'turn off' or re-route such a symbolic structure or 'turn on' a symbolic structure that exposes and affirms femino-centric relations between *both men*

and women workers? Li Min could hardly imagine such a place. Discovering this structure sounded like a worthy target for her PhD studies. But was there a more direct answer to the question of women's subordination – one that didn't rely on an elaborate archaeological dig into the social unconscious? Perhaps Li Min was looking in the wrong direction.

Across the now-crowded student café, Li Min's gaze fell on a woman attending to two preschool children who were busy eating their lunches of fruit, sandwiches and yoghurt. The woman fed one child with a spoon, calmed the other, organized more food for both and went on talking to both the children and her companion across the table. The man, dressed in the smart casual attire of a university lecturer, was busy looking at his phone and nodding as she talked. He then gathered up his papers, stood rather stiffly, touched her hand softly, and left. The woman then turned her attention to the children and, as she did, ate the sandwiches the children and her partner had left behind.

Signification is all very well, thought Li Min. But isn't the core of women's subordination found in the work done, in the actual labour of women; labour that includes caring, feeding, cleaning up and supporting others. Was this subordination more 'objective', material and 'in plain sight' than Fotaki and the theorists of deep structures were prepared to recognise? One of her advisers had been saying as much. Women's positioning was a function of the grip that the feudal patriarchal family had on their labour (Fraad et al., 2009). The problem lay in the intimate, individualized and personal relations of marriage and family life that deliberately obscured from both men and women *her* relative positioning as feudal labourer – a positioning where the woman's practical, sexual and emotional labour is appropriated by her partner ('lord?'), her children and others (Fraad, 2003). The argument is that what works in one sphere, the home, has a tendency to also work in others. The upshot of this would seem to be that unless a woman can find a man to act as a 'woman', as a feudal serf and as a source of

surplus family labour, then she will struggle with this feudal positioning in the workplace.

But isn't this changing? Li Min thought of her friends on similar paths to her, moving away from a traditional roles in the patriarchal feudal families which now seemed to her to be in crisis.

'You look thoughtful!' It was her friend Gemma. 'Yes, trying to think my way out of a couple of PhD questions.' 'What are they?' Gemma asked. 'The easiest one is what should be the target of my PhD. The tough one is how to make a reasonable living and not get screwed by some greedy boss or corporation.'

Gemma had just completed a master's degree in religious studies. They met a year before, serving beer to rugby fans while working for a temping agency. They shared a few drinks after work and Lin Min thought their relationship might be headed for intimacy. But Gemma stopped working for the temping agency and neither of them had followed up. Li Min saw Gemma occasionally around campus and noted her transformation. The traditional student garb of tired jeans and tee shirts had become light, wafer-thin silk shirts; expensive, elegant boots; and heavily pleated cotton trousers and skirts. She looked incredible and invincible, Li Min thought, as Gemma swept into the seat beside her.

'How do *you* do it?' Li asked. Gemma paused, weighing her answer carefully. She looked at Li Min thoughtfully and then spat out: 'I screw them back.'

Li Min gasped! It was one thing to resist or reject traditional marriage, and partnerships with men, and to speak the discourse of feminism around campus, but quite another to regard prostitution as a chance to exploit men by way of return.

Gender is a performance, right? I'm quoting Butler here (1990). Do we have to perform as a victim, as slave, as the subordinate of men? Do we have to put men on a pedestal and work for them? Or can we perform differently? Can we perform our gender, our sexuality and the things we like about being a woman and make a living out of that? Is that OK?

Li Min gasped again. Gemma explained that working at an exclusive and expensive hotel with a group of likeminded and supportive women had helped liberate her emotionally, politically and financially. After Gemma left, Li Min quickly sketched out a further PhD Topic and labelled it: 'Prostitution as feminist performance; a critical organizational ethnography' (Kessler, 2002; Scoular, 2004). She could hardly breathe at the thought of it. She imagined her supervisors' nervous support for the topic, while steering her firmly clear of a participatory research strategy. But perhaps her performance might be in finding a way to work for and with Chinese immigrant prostitutes (Coy, 2009; Liu and Finckenaue, 2010; Spanger, 2011), and perhaps she would find a way to support through her research other students (Roberts et al., 2007) who were working 'under the covers'?

CONCLUSION

Critical forms of organization and management inquiry begin with the aim of changing as well as investigating the conditions that are the topic of study. Of course, each of the major research traditions makes different objects the target of such inquiries. The Marxist aims at redirecting the flows of value, the postcolonialist seeks to reconstruct colonial subjectivity, the Foucauldian is engaged in shifting discourses, the psychoanalyst is re-ordering signifiers, and the feminist is upending existing structures. The challenge for researchers is developing research strategies that fit these dual aims. Drawing selectively on particular strands of work in these five traditions, we have sketched out how critical, qualitative, but change-focused work might be done. From a critical ethnography of the free store, to the feminist participatory action research with immigrant prostitutes, we have identified a set of strategies that in various ways necessarily reshape the participants, the

researchers and the wider conditions *as part of* the research studies. The implication, and main conclusion, one might draw from such research is that for the most part it is not concerned with the extractive production of commodified knowledge, but rather it regards making changes to the lives of the people involved in the inquiry as the main ‘output’.

Notes

- 1 The *Wharerata Writing Group* is a collective author that includes (in alphabetical order): Ozan Alakavuklar, Fahreen Almagir, Andrew Dickson, Craig Pritchard and Suze Wilson, all of the School of Management, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.
- 2 Li Min is a composite character developed from our engagement with a series of women working and studying in New Zealand.
- 3 Li Min is aware of Improving Dream Equality Access and Success (IDEAS) – a support group formed in 2003 by the undocumented students of the University of California of Los Angeles. IDEAS played a vital role in organizing a campaign on the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minor (DREAM) Act in 2010. She and her new friends are planning to form a group linked to IDEAS and all such Committees around the globe.
- 4 Despite Li Min’s identity as a privileged migrant student in relation to China, she has experience of living in the margin; hence Nkomo’s (2011) arguments may help Li Min in theorizing her lived experience, and political views, and thus to challenge the assumption of whether representation is possible. Subsequently, she can draw from Imas and Weston’s (2012) analyses, which illustrate the experience of the organization of people who lack civil stance and their contested and chaotic reality.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, A. (1995). The politics of literary post-coloniality. *Race and Class*, 36(1): 1–20.
- Alakavuklar, O., Dickson, A. & Stablein, R. (2016). The alienation of scholarship in modern business schools: From Marxist material relations to the Lacanian subject. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, doi: 10.5465/amle.2015.0004.
- Almagir, F. & Cairns, G. (2015). Economic inequality of the Badli workers of Bangladesh: Contested entitlements and a ‘perpetually temporary’ life-world. *Human Relations*, 68(7): 1131–53.
- Alvesson, M. & Deetz, S. A. (2000). *Doing critical management research*. London: Sage.
- Alvesson, M. & Karreman, D. (2000). Varieties of discourse: On the study of organizations through discourse analysis. *Human Relations*, 53(9): 1125–49.
- Arnaud, Gilles. (2002). The organization and the symbolic: Organizational dynamics viewed from a Lacanian perspective. *Human Relations*, 55(6): 691–716.
- Awatere, D. (1984). *Māori sovereignty*. Auckland: Broadsheet.
- Bakan, J. (2012). *The corporation: The pathological pursuit of profit and power*. Hachette UK.
- Banerjee, S. B. (2011) Voices of the governed: Towards a theory of the translocal. *Organization*, 18(3): 323–44.
- Bhabha, H. (1994). *Location of culture*. London: Routledge.
- Brah, A. (1993). ‘Race’ and ‘culture’ in the gendering of labour markets: South Asian young Muslim women and the labour market. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 19(3):441–58.
- Braverman, H. (1974). *Labor and monopoly capital: The degradation of work in the twentieth century*. New York: NYU Press.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble and the subversion of identity*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Calás, B. M. & Smircich, L. (2006). From ‘the woman’s’ point of view: Ten years later: towards a feminist organization studies. In S. R. Clegg, C. Hardy, T. B. Lawrence & W. R. Nord (Eds), *The Sage Handbook of Organization Studies* (pp. 284–346). London: Sage.
- Chatterjee, P. (2005). *The politics of the governed: Reflections on popular politics in most of the world*. New Delhi: Permanent Black.
- Chio, V. C. M. (2005). *Malaysia and the development process: Globalization, knowledge transfers and postcolonial dilemmas*. London: Routledge.
- Contu, A., Driver, M., Jones, C. & Woźniak, A. (2010) The dream that caused reality: The place of the Lacanian subject of science in

- the field of organization theory. *Organization*, 17(3): 395–411.
- Copjec, J. (1994). *Supposing the subject*. Volume 1. London: Verso.
- Costas, J. & Taheri, A. (2012). 'The return of the primal father' in postmodernity? A Lacanian analysis of authentic leadership. *Organization Studies*, 33(9): 1195–1216.
- Coy, M. (2009). This body which is not mine: The notion of the habit body, prostitution and (dis) embodiment. *Feminist Theory*, 10(1): 61–75.
- Cummings, S. & Bridgman, T. (2011). The relevant past: Why the history of management should be critical for our future. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 10(1): 77–93.
- Cushen, J. & Thompson, P. (2016). Financialization and value: Why labour and the labour process still matter. *Work, Employment & Society*, 30(2): 352–65.
- de Vries, M. F. K., (1985). The Dark Side of Entrepreneurship. *Harvard Business Review*, 63(6): 160–167.
- de Vries, M. F. K., 1991. *Organizations on the couch: Clinical perspectives on organizational behavior and change*. Jossey-Bass.
- de Vries, M. F. K., (1993). The dynamics of family controlled firms: The good and the bad news. *Organizational dynamics*, 21(3): 59–71.
- de Vries, M. F. K. (1996). The anatomy of the entrepreneur: Clinical observations. *Human Relations*, 49(7): 853–83.
- Dean, M. (1994). *Critical and effective histories: Foucault's methods and historical sociology*. London: Routledge.
- Diamond, M. A. (1993). *The unconscious life of organizations: Interpreting organizational identity*. Westport, CT: Quorum Books/Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Dickson, A. (2011). The jouissance of the Lard(er): Gender, desire and anxiety in the weight-loss industry. *Culture and Organization*, 17(4): 313–28.
- Dreyfus, H. L. & Rabinow, P. (1983). *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics* (2nd edition). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Driver, M. (2009). Struggling with lack: A Lacanian perspective on organizational identity. *Organization Studies*, 30(1): 55–72.
- Escobar, A. (1995). *Encountering development: The making and unmaking of the Third World, 1945–1992*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Escobar, A. (2011). Sustainability: Design for the pluriverse. *Development*, 54(2): 137–40.
- Foley, G. (2011). Black power, land rights and academic history. *Griffith Law Review*, 20(3): 608–18.
- Fotaki, M. (2007). Patient choice in healthcare in England and Sweden: From quasi-market and back to market? A comparative analysis of failure in unlearning. *Public Administration*, 85(4): 1059–75.
- Fotaki, M., (2011). The sublime object of desire (for knowledge): Sexuality at work in business and management schools in England. *British Journal of Management*, 22(1): 42–53.
- Fotaki, M. & Harding, N. (2012). Lacan and sexual difference in organization and management theory: Towards a hysterical academy? *Organization*, 20(2): 153–72.
- Foucault, M., 1970. *The order of things: An archaeology of the human sciences*. London: Tavistock.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge and the discourse on language* (A. M. Sheridan Smith, trans.). London: Tavistock.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (A. Sheridan, trans.). London: Penguin Books.
- Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality: The will to knowledge* (R. Hurley, trans. Volume 1). New York: Random House.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings by Michel Foucault 1972–1977* (C. Gordon, ed.). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1985). *The use of pleasure: Volume 2 of the history of sexuality* (R. Hurley, trans.). New York: Vintage.
- Foucault, M. (1986). *The history of sexuality: Volume 3 – the care of the self* (R. Hurley, trans.). New York: Pantheon.
- Foucault, M. (2008). *The courage of truth (the government of self and others II): Lectures at the College de France, 1983–1984* (G. Burchell, trans.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fraad, H. (2003). Class transformation in the household: An opportunity and a threat. *Critical Sociology*, 29(1): 47–65.

- Fraad, H., Resnick, S. & Wolff, R. (2009). *For every knight in shining armor, there's a castle waiting to be cleaned: A Marxist-Feminist analysis of the household. Class Struggle on the Home Front* (pp. 19–70). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Freud, S. (1905). (1976). *Jokes and their relation to the unconscious*. New York: WW Norton & Company.
- Freud, S. & Strachey, J. (1962). *The ego and the id* (No. 142). New York: WW Norton & Company.
- Frosh, S. (1987). *The politics of psychoanalysis: An introduction to Freudian and post-Freudian theory*. London: Macmillan Education.
- Gabriel, Y. (1999). Beyond happy families: A critical reevaluation of the control-resistance-identity triangle. *Human Relations*, 52(2): 179–203.
- Gabriel, Y. (1999). *Organizations in depth: The psychoanalysis of organizations*. London: Sage.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (1996). *'The' end of capitalism (as we knew it): A feminist critique of political economy*. Minnesota, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2006). *A postcapitalist politics*. Minnesota, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2008). Diverse economies: Performative practices for other worlds. *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(5): 613–32.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K., Cameron, J. & Healy, S. (2013). *Take back the economy: An ethical guide for transforming our communities*. Minnesota, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Graeber, D. (2012). *The globalization movement and the new new left*. New York: Basic Books.
- Grigg, R. (2008). *Lacan, language, and philosophy*. Albany NY: SUNY.
- Guha, R. (1989). Dominance without hegemony and its historiography. In R. Guha (Ed.), *Subaltern studies VI* (pp. 210–309). New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Holvino, E. (2010). Intersections: The simultaneity of race, gender and class in organization studies. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 17(3): 248–76.
- Imas, J. M. & Weston, A. (2012). From Harare to Rio de Janeiro: Kukiya-Favela organization of the excluded. *Organization*, 19(2): 205–27.
- Jones, C. & Spicer, A. (2005). The sublime object of entrepreneurship. *Organization*, 12(2): 223–46.
- Jordan, S. & Yeomans, D. (1995). Critical ethnography: Problems in contemporary theory and practice. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 16(3): 389–408.
- Kenny, K. M. (2010). Beyond ourselves: Passion and the dark side of identification in an ethical organization. *Human Relations*, 63(6): 857–73.
- Kesler, K. (2002). Is a feminist stance in support of prostitution possible? An exploration of current trends. *Sexualities*, 5(2): 219–35.
- Lacan, J. (1977). *Ecrits* (Alan Sheridan, trans.). London: Tavistock.
- Lacan, Jacques. (2011). The seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book XX: Encore: 1972–1973.
- Lacan, J., Miller, J.-A. & Grigg, R. (2007). *The seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book 17, The other side of psychoanalysis*. New York: Norton.
- Langer, B. (2002). Commodified enchantment: Children and consumer capitalism. *Thesis Eleven* 69(1): 67–81.
- Liu, M. & Finckenauer, J. O. (2010). The resurgence of prostitution in China: Explanations and implications. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 26(1): 89–102.
- Malone, K. R. (2008). Psychoanalysis formalization and logic and the question of speaking and affect. *Theory & Psychology*, 18(2): 179–93.
- Mignolo, D. W. (1993). Colonial and postcolonial discourse: Cultural critique or academic colonialism? *Latin American Research Review*, 28(3): 120–34.
- Mir, A. & Mir, R. (2014). Organizational studies and the subjects of imperialism. In P. Adler, G. Morgan & P. Du Gay (Eds), *The Oxford handbook of sociology, social theory and organization studies: Contemporary currents* (pp. 660–83). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mir, R. (2011). Blurring the boundaries between case research and ethnography: Reflections on research in multinational corporations. In R. Piekkari & W. Catherine (Eds), *Rethinking the case study in international business and management research* (pp. 301–22). London: Edward Elgar.
- Mohanty, C. (2003). *Feminism without borders: Decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

- Nkomo, S. (2011). A postcolonial and anti-colonial reading of 'African' leadership and management in organization studies: Tensions, contradictions and possibilities. *Organization*, 18(3): 365–86.
- Nyberg, D. & Delaney, H. (2014). Critical ethnographic research: Negotiations, influences, and interests. In E. Jeanes & T. Huzzard (Eds), *Critical management research: Reflections from the field* (pp. 63–81). London: Sage.
- Olsen, M. (2006). Understanding the mechanisms of neoliberal control: Lifelong learning, flexibility and knowledge capitalism. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 25(3): 213–30.
- Ong, A. (1987). *Spirits of resistance and capitalist discipline: Factory women in Malaysia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ong, A. (1999). *Flexible citizenship: The cultural logics of transnationality*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Ong, A. (2006) *Neoliberalism as exception: Mutations in citizenship and sovereignty*. Duke University Press.
- Özkazancı-Pan, B. (2008). International management research meets 'the rest of the world'. *The Academy of Management Review*, 33(4): 964–74
- Panoho, J. & Stablien, R. (2012). A postcolonial perspective on organizational governance in New Zealand: Reconciling Māori and Pākehā Forms. In A. Prasad (Ed.), *Against the grain: Advances in postcolonial organization studies* (pp. 200–17). Denmark: Copenhagen Business School Press.
- Parker, I. (1989) *The crisis in modern social psychology—and how to end it*. London: Routledge.
- Parker, M. (2002). *Against management: Organization in the age of managerialism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Parker, M., Cheney, G., Fournier, V. & Land, C. (Eds) (2014). *The Routledge companion to alternative organization*. London: Routledge.
- Prasad, A. (Ed.) *Against the grain: advances in postcolonial organization studies* (pp. 200–17). Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press.
- Roberts, J., 2005. The power of the 'imaginary' in disciplinary processes. *Organization*, 12(5), 619–642
- Roberts, R., Bergström, S. & La Rooy, D. (2007). UK students and sex work: Current knowledge and research issues. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 17(2): 141–6.
- Said, W. E. (1995[1978]). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Scoular, J., (2004). The 'subject' of prostitution: Interpreting the discursive, symbolic and material position of sex/work in feminist theory. *Feminist Theory*, 5(3), pp. 343–355.
- Sharpe, S. (2014). Potentiality and impotentiality in J. K. Gibson-Graham. *Rethinking Marxism*, 26(1): 27–43.
- Smith, D.N. (2015). Profit maxims: Capitalism and the common sense of time and money. In H. F. Dahms (Ed.), *Globalization, critique and social theory: Diagnoses and challenges* (pp. 29–74). London: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Spanger, M. (2011). Human trafficking as a lever for feminist voices? Transformations of the Danish policy field of prostitution. *Critical Social Policy*, 31(4): 517–39.
- Spivak, C. G. (1988). Can subaltern speak? In C. Nelson, & L. Grossberg (Ed.), *Marxism and the interpretation of culture* (pp. 271–313). London: Macmillan Education.
- Treen M (2015) *How Unite took on the fast food companies over zero hours contracts and won*. Available at: http://www.unite.org.nz/how_unite_took_on_the_fast_food_companies_over_zero_hour_contracts_and_won (accessed 20 November 2017).
- Vanheule, S., Lievrouw, A. & Verhaeghe, P. (2003). Burnout and intersubjectivity: A psychoanalytical study from a Lacanian perspective. *Human Relations*, 56(3): 321–38.
- Willis, P. E. (1977). *Learning to labor: How working class kids get working class jobs*. Columbia University Press.
- Ybema, S., Yanow, D., Wels, H. & Kamsteeg, F. (2009). Studying everyday organizational life. In S. Ybema, D. Yanow, H. Wels & F. Kamsteeg (Eds), *Organizational ethnography: Studying the complexities of everyday life* (pp. 1–19). London: Sage.
- Žižek, S. (1990). 'How the non-duped err.' *Qui Parle*, 4(1): 1–20.

Poststructuralism

Angelo Benozzo

INTRODUCTION

The term *qualitative research* denotes a movement developing in academia at the beginning of the 1970s which brought together various approaches from differing ontological, epistemological, methodological, political and ethical origins, all of which were critical of the traditional ways of doing research: the strategies of the survey, and of the experimental and quasi-experimental study. This movement then also fed into managerial and organizational studies. In 1979, a turning point came when a special issue of the prestigious academic journal *Administrative Science Quarterly* appeared, entitled ‘Qualitative methodologies’, which gave scholarly legitimacy to qualitative research in the field of management studies.

Qualitative research has been described as a comprehensive site or arena in which scholars share a mutual rejection ‘of the blend

of scientism, foundationalist epistemology, instrumental reasoning, and the philosophical anthropology of disengagement that has marked “mainstream” social sciences’ (Schwandt, 2000, p. 190). Scholars who gravitate to this arena may have very different perspectives and interests, but each one, be it consciously or unconsciously, grounds her/his research in some branch of philosophy, such as phenomenology, hermeneutics, critical theory or social constructionism, or, perhaps, postmodernism and poststructuralism. *Science* and *research*, after all, are concepts subject to different views and conflicting interpretations, and their meaning may vary according to the philosophical approach adopted and the political, as well as historical, moment.

Poststructuralism, then, is just one of the numerous philosophical movements that has influenced social research and management studies, and my task here is to present the reader with an outline of this movement,

dwelling on a few key philosophical concepts so as to make clear how these are reconceived in poststructuralism. I offer just one of many possible ways to ‘settle’ things: no easy task, given the complexity of the topic and the number of studies which have been inspired by poststructuralism, both in the social sciences and in organizational studies. I apologize in advance if the reader is left with the impression that my chapter fails to do justice to such a rich and complex philosophical field.

I begin by attempting to outline poststructuralism by placing it within the broader movements of ‘posts’. I then explore some of the key issues that characterize poststructuralism: structure and difference; the subject and power; language and deconstruction. In the final pages, I reflect upon the implications of these key issues for those doing qualitative research and make a connection with the ongoing debate on post-qualitative research, which appears to be one of the most promising frontiers in the field of qualitative inquiry. Despite being aware of how useful it can be to provide cases to illustrate a point, I have chosen not to give too much space to examples of post-structuralist pieces of research. To do this would mean, on the one hand, reinforcing the idea that there is a ‘proper’ way to do qualitative research, and, on the other, going against the very spirit of poststructuralism, a spirit (as we shall see) that questions any normative, prescriptive model.

It is my firm conviction, however, that, in order for qualitative research to interact creatively with data (Benozzo et al., 2013), it needs to be rooted in philosophical theory. To ‘produce different knowledge and to produce knowledge differently’ (St. Pierre, 1997, p. 175), we need to read hard and ground our work in a theoretical perspective, whether this be phenomenology, social constructionism, critical theory, feminist theory, poststructuralism, new materialism, posthumanism or even something new and still to be ‘discovered’.

‘POSTS’ – INCLUDING POSTMODERNISM AND POSTSTRUCTURALISM

Although the Latin word *post*, meaning ‘after’, is often used in the purely chronological sense, this is not its sole meaning in the words ‘poststructuralism’ and ‘postmodernism’. The prefix ‘post’ highlights a different logic or the overcoming of an obstacle, and should not simply be taken to mean something coming after modernism and structuralism chronologically: in fact, the emergence of postmodernism and poststructuralism was not the consequence of the *end* of modernism and structuralism, because the latter did not disappear. Instead, poststructuralism and postmodernism take certain key themes of structuralism and modernism and rework them in the light of new theories and insights.

Postmodernism and poststructuralism are part of a whole series of ‘posts’ (such as postcolonialism, postcritical, posthumanist, postFordist, postpositivist¹, postfeminist, postfoundational, postemancipatory, postmemory, postrevolutionary, posteverything ...) which, together with a plethora of ‘turns’ (the linguistic turn, the interpretive turn, the narrative turn, the critical turn, the reflexive turn, the turn to affect ...) have come to inhabit the landscape of the social sciences over the last forty years. Every ‘post’ rejects the idea of the ‘stable structure’, and takes as its starting point a break with the assumptions typical of Western Enlightenment (Crotty, 1998). Some scholars argue that it is impossible to clearly distinguish postmodernism from poststructuralism (Sarup, 1993). Indeed, they do have many points in common, but there are also differences (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009). Lather (1993), for example, distinguishes between the two terms by arguing that postmodernism ‘raises issues of chronology, economics (e.g. Post-Fordism) and aesthetics, whereas poststructural[ism] is used,

more often in relation to academic theorizing after structuralism' (p. 688).

Some scholars consider poststructuralism to be a specific way of thinking belonging to the broader movement that goes by the name of postmodernism. According to them, the latter is a geographical and conceptual movement, which appeared after and in opposition to modernism. First coined with regard to an architectural movement rebelling against what was seen as a-historic, super-rational functionalism, it was applied in the 1960s to a group of American literary critics and spread to other areas, for example economics and the arts. Postmodernism owes its fame to Lyotard's book entitled *The postmodern condition* (1979), in which the author distances himself from the following: the values and practices of the Enlightenment; an unconditional faith in Reason, Freedom, Progress, History and Man; metatheories that aspire to build totalitarian theories of physics and science; and the notion that there are 'some rational, global solutions and explanations, some general principles which guarantee progress in the development of knowledge' (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009, p. 180). Lyotard calls these totalizing theories 'metanarratives' and describes the postmodern condition as an 'incredulity towards metanarratives' (Lyotard, 1979, p. xxiv).

Crotty (1998) describes postmodernism as a response to the cultural transformations taking place in the present age. These changes, which involved many spheres of human activity – including literature, philosophy, the social sciences, art and architecture – basically produced a need for new ways of thinking and understanding and new forms of representation and communication, all of which resulted in postmodernism. In the 1980s, when the works of the French poststructuralists finally became available in English, postmodernism found its philosophical support in poststructuralism. In line with Wolin (1992), Crotty sees postmodernism as

the cultural movement of the unmaking, of the collapse of the antithesis, of the elimination of distinctions, and it is this idea of unmaking which brings postmodernism and poststructuralism closer together.

As said above, it is over-simplistic to state that poststructuralism is what comes after structuralism. In fact, poststructuralism is a French term used primarily to describe a philosophical movement emerging in the 1960s which not only influenced philosophy, but also literature and the arts, and politics, sociology and psychology. Poststructuralism brings together a set of French philosophers (principally Derrida, Deleuze, Foucault, Lyotard and Kristeva), who, while expressing very different ideas, were united by a dissenting position with respect to science and established moral values. The works of these authors,

show poststructuralism as a thorough disruption of our secure sense of meaning and reference in language, of our understanding of our senses and of the arts, of our understanding of identity, of our sense of history and of its role in the present, and of our understanding of language as something free of the work of the unconscious. (Williams, 2005, p. 3)

Despite their significant differences, these philosophers' works can be read as a reaction, on the one hand, to the structuralism prevailing in those years, and, on the other, to an idea of the human being deriving from humanism, which endured until French existentialism. The humanist idea of the subject had proved mistaken, and this led those French philosophers to question any acquired certainty and explore how philosophical and scientific practices had produced that subject of Western culture that had caused such massive destruction during the two World Wars. Later, I will be taking a close look at their critique of the humanist subject; I shall now examine their critique of one of the cornerstones of structuralism: the idea of structure. But before continuing, it is useful to explain the connections between poststructuralism

and management and organization studies. Since the mid-1980s, the works of Foucault have played a central role in that area of studies grouped together under the term Critical Management Studies (CMS) (Alvesson et al., 2009).

A first wave of CMS was inspired by the concept of power – see later in this chapter – Foucault proposed (Knights, 2009) and, in particular, many scholars of CMS have been influenced by Foucault's book (1977) *Discipline and punish*, where work organizations, institutions, schools and military apparatus are seen as something akin to prisons 'insofar as they involve hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment and the examination as technologies of correct training, discipline, and surveillance' (Knights, 2009, p. 157).

The first wave of poststructuralism in CMS was followed by a second, more recent wave, which developed poststructuralism in different directions (Jones, 2009). For example, Contu (2008) and Vidaillet (2007) have drawn on Jacques Lacan in their work, while other authors (Willmott, 2005; De Cock and Böhm, 2007) have turned to thinkers like Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Žižek, who were in turn inspired by and revisited some of the key concepts of poststructuralism.

STRUCTURE AND DIFFERENCE

The dissenting position towards structuralism starts by subverting the traditional hierarchical relationship between *structure* (a model or pattern which is both descriptive and prescriptive) and *difference* (or limit), as well as rejecting any possibility of arriving at 'the Truth' (true knowledge). For structuralism, a structure is what is regularly repeated. For example, the normal 'life cycle' in human resource management describes a repeated pattern made up of different stages (recruiting,

selection, performance evaluation, reward and/or training and development), as well as the relations between each stage in the model. However, there may be limits (differences and variations) to the normal model (the sequence and content may change and may look like this: recruitment, selection, selection, performance evaluation, selection). The existence of a normal, regulatory model implies that any exception is conceived as a deviation from the norm, and once we have defined what is normal, the limit (difference and variation) can also be measured and corrected if necessary. Normalization produces the objects of knowledge by creating hierarchies, by comparing and homogenizing, by differentiating and excluding.

Poststructuralism rejects this framework and restores dignity to the limit (the exception from the norm, the difference, the variation). In essence, the starting point for an understanding of poststructuralism would seem to be this: the differences and limits of a model/structure have an important creative role to play. They are not to be devalued or considered as something to be negated or avoided. For poststructuralists, the limit (or difference) is no longer constantly compared to the model, but becomes the centre, the core; something good in its own right. 'The limit is the core' writes Williams (2005, p. 2), which means that any form of stable knowledge is defined by its limits and cannot be conceived of without them. While structuralism privileges a model that is repeated identically over time, thereby becoming the norm, poststructuralism overturns this hierarchical relationship between pattern and difference, making the exception more important.

These philosophers ask what happens when what is important is not what is repeated, but what is different – the difference, the differentiation? What might happen if we upset the hierarchical order of structure and limit and if a model is disempowered of its descriptive

and prescriptive force, so as to make room for what always changes? Within the field of management and organization studies, for example, poststructuralism has led some scholars to rethink the historical oppositions between organization and change, order and disorder, organization and disorganization (Chia, 1999; Cooper, 1986). Cooper (1986) views organization as being in conversation with disorder and disorganization. Following Deleuze's philosophy of difference, Linstead and Thanem (2007) reconceptualize the relationship between change and organization as not being 'opposed in any straightforward way ... [they] are imbricated in each other in a continuously responsive conversation between organization and the "objects" it tries to organize, i.e. between organization and non-organization' (p. 1485).

With this focus on difference instead of normality, what takes centre stage is not the recurring structure (the model that always repeats itself) but whatever varies and changes. If we shift our attention from centre to periphery, from the structure to the limit, from the model to the difference, then we realize to what extent the notion of normality (or what structuralists call a structure) draws a demarcation line, positioning differences or deviation as far away as possible from the centre. Difference should not be understood as diverging or departing from a model: for poststructuralists, limits or the *differences resist identification*, because otherwise they themselves would become the norm. In itself, a limit is elusive, but we can try to look at its effects, and above all we can problematize normality (the centre) and challenge its claim to 'natural' truth. The new questions become: what would happen if life took on different forms than those described and prescribed by the model? What would happen if fixed, stable truths became unstable? Consequently, how we can create new things, unexpected forms of life, different situations? What the poststructuralist French philosophers share is this 'description' of limit as something

indetermined and *elusive*, almost impossible to understand using modernist conceptual categories. They all investigate the effects of differences in different areas, and follow the traces of these differences.

Poststructuralism challenges our certainties; it introduces movement and disorder into a world that seeks stability, and since these thinkers are focused on removing the categories and metanarratives of science, it follows that poststructuralism has been, and still is, influential in fighting discrimination based on sex, gender and sexual identity; it has enhanced awareness of those forms of inclusion or exclusion related to social class and race. It is a form of resistance to the implicit or explicit forms of violence exercised through science and research and through values and morals, not to mention artistic canons and the law.

The starting point, therefore, is to begin to dismantle these oppositions, categories and meanings, and uses, habits and beliefs, making room for those differences that have been removed from history and showing that there is no obligation to enact these forms of behaviour even if they are stratified and consolidated in human affairs. For example, the categories of identity (race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, gender, etc.), with their hierarchical relationship between two extremes, are the result of a process; they were a way of solving certain problems that humanity was facing. These arrangements have been repeated and stratified over time, but they are not binding in character. The way we relate to each other, and the categories we use to describe ourselves, or our organizational practices, are the result of mere historical circumstance, where the pressing need was to solve certain problems that humanity (or Western culture, or its institutions) was facing. This way of thinking has two consequences: (1) structures are discontinuous and entirely contingent; (2) structures consolidate and congeal over time, to the point that they are deemed necessary and natural.

THE SUBJECT AND POWER

In philosophy, a 'subject' is a generic word used to indicate a human being or person, what psychologists call 'the individual'. Together with words such as *subjectivity* and *subjectification*, the concept of *subject* stands at the centre of poststructuralist philosophy. Because of their French origin, when these concepts migrated to the English-speaking world, translating them was no easy feat (Gherardi, 2016; Henriques et al., 1984). For example, because the French verb *assujettir* means both 'to produce subjectivity' and 'to make subject to', and the English language has no single word which conveys both meanings, scholars had to use two words to translate the French *assujettissement*: subjectivity and subjectification.

By dethroning the subject once and for all, poststructuralism disempowered one of the most influential concepts of the modern age, together with the notions of power, constitutive subjectivity and agency. Of course, the subject had already been partially decentred by Marx's description of the human being as a product of society, by Freud's theory of the unconscious, by Nietzsche declaring that God was dead, and by Gramsci, who provided the basis for understanding how subjectivity comes into being with his concept of hegemony. The poststructuralists worked through these positions, distancing themselves from some of them at the same time, especially from Marxism.

Criticism of the humanist subject is bound up with the criticism of the notion of the 'author' found in two short essays by Barthes and Foucault. In 1968, Barthes declares the death of the author and states that the author's identity is a construction of French rationalism, empiricism and the Reformation. He concludes that 'the author is never more than the instance saying I' (p. 145), whose identity is a particular configuration within all the possibilities offered by language. While the absence of the author might seem to make the reader

more important, because 'a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination' (p. 148), the author's demise means the reader's identity disappears as well: '... the reader is without history, biography, psychology' (Barthes, 1968, p. 148). Foucault too (1969a) returns to the same idea when he asks: 'What is an author?' and, recalling Beckett, 'What does it matter who's speaking?' Naming the author, for Foucault, characterizes the text's presence and marks the edges of the text. The author is 'a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses' (Foucault, 1969a, p. 119). The notion of the author is a product of discourse: 'The author function therefore is characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning of certain discourses within a society' (p. 108). This movement, aimed at destabilizing the notion of the author (Benozzo et al., 2016), runs parallel to the one declaring the death of the subject constructed by humanism.

The humanist subject is a unified, self-founded, rational individual – stable, coherent, self-conscious, knowing and outside of history. The subject of the modern era is Cartesian man who, having uttered the 'magic' sentence *Cogito, ergo sum*, became the source of truth and knowledge. By defining as 'object' everything that is not 'subject', Descartes established a series of binarisms (self/other, subject/object and identity/difference) which have come to underpin Western epistemology. Once what is external has been defined as an object, then the outside can be studied, measured and controlled. 'Real' knowledge about the outside can be produced: the subject can make predictions and carry out changes. This subject appeared on the scene of Western culture in the seventeenth century, and coincides with the notion of the human being used in bureaucracies, in organizations and in the narratives of the social sciences. There are traces of this subject in the legal system, granting rights, obligations and responsibilities, and he is also the citizen subjected to forms of normalization, discipline and punishment.

Foucault's famous announcement of the 'death of man' (1966) must be interpreted as a rejection of the notion of constitutive subjectivity that found its final expression in German Idealism (Mascaretti, 2013). This notion refers to the subject who dictates the conditions of experience, who is the motivating force behind civilization, the protagonist of history; he is the source of the moral values that guide action. His symbolic representation is to be found in the Vitruvian man who is the measure of all things: an adult white male, reared in Western culture, positioned at the centre of the Universe. He is the subject who creates the object of knowledge (nature, society, organizations, the Other) in his own image and stubbornly projects his own categories onto the objects that he has constructed. His being in the world is guided by a sense of purpose, which is the emancipation and liberation of humanity. The humanist subject is free and has agency; he can escape oppression to pursue his ambitions and intentions. Through reason and self-control, this man can free humanity from its errors and archaic beliefs. Whoever is truly able to overcome unexpected difficulties becomes a model for the rest of humanity.

This rejection of the notion of constitutive subjectivity found an echo in the work of Althusser (1971), for whom the subject is interpellated – hailed and positioned – through ideological systems, which operate silently, in ways of which we are unaware. Through interpellation, the ideological apparatuses of the state (such as schools, the Church and the family, and the legal and political systems and trade unions) govern people in the interest of the ruling class and with the assistance of law enforcement (the police and armed forces). Althusser uses the example of when a policeman hails a particular person: 'Hey, you there!' and the latter responds (or turns towards the source of the shout). The policeman creates the subject, who may in turn feel like a scoundrel, or an upright citizen. The consequence of this view

is that the subject has the illusion of being the author of its subjectivity, when it is actually ideology, which interpellates the subject through language and constitutes its subjectivity. For Althusser, the subject is 'always-already' made subject to in language.

Foucault focused much of his work on this theme of how the human being is made subject, and one of his important contributions was to help us understand that what we call *subject* is a concept that has changed over time. His work can be seen as a continuous study into the compulsory and coercive forms that constitute the subject, and his main interest consisted of creating 'a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subject. My work has dealt with three modes of objectification that transform human beings into subjects' (Foucault, 1983, p. 208). The first line of inquiry was related to the ways in which the subject becomes the object of science. For example, the subject is constituted as a speaking subject – in general grammar, philology and linguistics – or as a subject who labours in wealth and economics. The second line of research investigated how the subject is objectified through dividing practices that set up binarisms such as self/other, sane/insane, criminal and 'good boy', and the third line of research consisted of the ways of objectification through which men 'have learned to recognize themselves as subjects of "sexuality"' (Foucault, 1983, p. 208).

In poststructuralism, then, the modern notion of the subject is replaced by that of an emerging or fragmented one, constantly 'becoming' in relation to the positions occupied simultaneously within discourses. Discourses circulate in written or oral form: they exist in social practices and in the layout of institutions (school, family, organizations, homes, churches) and require the agency of the subject to be enacted. Discourses are also beyond-text – in so far as they are also comprised of non-textual elements (e.g. the visual, the spoken, etc.) (Parker & The

Bolton Discourse Network, 1999) – and they ‘... authorize what can and cannot be said; they produce relations of power and communities of consent and dissent, and thus discursive boundaries are always being redrawn around what constitutes the desirable and undesirable and around what it is that makes possible particular structures of intelligibility and unintelligibility’ (Britzman, 2000, p. 36). This means that discourses make the subject intelligible and legitimate; they offer him different and, at times, contradictory positions that he may take up in social contexts, organizations, the family and so on. Positioning confers rights and duties, defining the obligations that an individual has towards other individuals as well as those of the latter toward the former (Harré & Moghaddam, 2013).

Together with this reconceptualization of the subject, poststructuralism (and in particular Foucault) involves a reworking of the notion of power. In humanism, power is something a person owns. Man is born with agency, and therefore with power, which he may use as he likes. Power is a prerogative of the individual who can exercise his will over others by forcing those less powerful to do things they do not want to do. Foucault criticizes this view and instead of the word ‘power’, writes of ‘power relations’, for example, in the family, in society, in organizations and institutions. This means, first, that power is a system of relations prevalent in society (not a relationship between oppressor and oppressed) and, second, that individuals are not the recipients of power, but the space where power is enacted or resisted. Weedon reminds us that ‘Power is a relation. It inheres in difference and is a dynamic of control, compliance and lack of control between discourses and the subjects constituted by discourses, who are their agents. Power is exercised within discourses in the way in which they constitute and govern individual subjects’ (1997, p. 110). We must not have an over-deterministic view of discourses, because the subject is never

completely subject to them². The positions available clearly represent a limitation of agency, but at the same time make available certain kinds of knowledge and actions that would not be possible if the subject took on different positionings.

In other words, in poststructuralism there is a twofold (dual) movement in the construction of subjectivity³. The subject exhibits agency by taking up certain discourses and *simultaneously*, those same discourses force him to take up a certain kind of subjectivity. Subjectification has a dual nature, and should not be understood solely as a coercive force operating *on* the subject – and it is this position that distances poststructuralism from Althusser. The subject is ‘subjected to the regime of meaning of a particular discourse and enabled to act accordingly’, but is at the same time ‘a site for possible forms of subjectivity’ (Weedon, 1997, p. 34). The subject may also resist the power that determines him and counteract discourses to which he is made subject, but at the same time and necessarily, he depends on being subjected to be intelligible and recognizable. The subject is simultaneously forged by external forces, but it is precisely within these forces that agency finds space. Agency is always taken up within a given framework.

In the field of management and organization studies, some researchers have investigated the multiplicity of subjectivity as well as its contradictions, ambiguities and discontinuities. Scholars have theorized and analysed how organizations (mainly through regulatory discourses) can forge the subjectivity of individuals or how different subjectivities emerge from surveillance-based organizations (Ahonen et al., 2014; Baack & Prasch, 1997; Benozzo, Pizzorno et al., 2015; Boje et al., 1996; Calás & Smircich, 1999; Collinson, 2003; Cooper & Burrell, 1988; Fleming, 2007; Ford, 2006; Harding et al., 2011; Hassard & Parker, 1993; Linstead, 2004; Pizzorno et al., 2015; Prasad, 2012).

LANGUAGE AND DECONSTRUCTION

Basically, humanism and structuralism can be read as an attempt to define the essence of things, the factor that can identify something or someone and group them together with others of the same type, so as to create an order, a system of classification, within an existence dominated by chaos and disorder. In the *Archaeology of knowledge* (1969b), Foucault reconstructed how human sciences used language to build binarism, categories, classification schemes and tables/grids that reflect an 'innate' order of things. These deep structures were supposed to provide the framework within which to control the untidiness of life. Poststructural theories, feminist poststructural theories and queer theory (Butler, 1999, 2004; Halperin, 1995) have troubled those structures, and it was precisely the poststructuralist critique of language and, in particular, deconstruction, which brought to light how language functions by producing structures which we believe to be real, but are actually very primitive, and which create forms of privilege.

Poststructuralism rejects those humanist theories of language, which generally posit the *correspondence* between a word and something out there in the world – words correspond to things existing in the world, and language therefore mirrors what we encounter. These are significant issues, because the huge variety of things that happen in the world makes it impossible to find a correspondence for everything in language; in other words, it is difficult to invent the words which might match everything that exists in the world. For that reason, using the humanist idea of language leads us to group together into categories, classes and so on, certain things and behaviours, ideas and people, which may seem similar, but are in fact very different. A good example is the category *homosexual*. In an attempt to create order and coherence, some people are included in this category, but this obscures their differences in relation to

other identity categories such as class, ethnicity, gender or age. Moreover, since the homosexual category is weak, we are forced to fix, or define the essence both of the thing itself (the homosexual category), and of the real, live homosexuals inhabiting the world, so that the category and the individuals can be matched. This activity, consisting of a search for sameness (not for difference), which combines entities only apparently similar, is carried out through language.

For poststructuralists, language does not mirror the world. A significant starting point for their critique is Derrida's revision (1967) of the linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure (1916). Humanist theories of language conceived words as signs representing a *presence* that exists somewhere else in the world, and there are traces of this idea also when we wonder about the meaning hidden behind words in ordinary language, as if the meaning existed somewhere else. Saussure changes this framework, because he claims that the meaning resides in the sign and nowhere else. To arrive at this point, he makes a distinction in the sign between the signified and the signifier. The first is the meaning and the second is the sound or image of the written sign. The point that Saussure clarified is that the relationship between the two elements of the sign is arbitrary; the signifier does not express the signified and the signified does not reflect a sound or form. The meaning of a sign 'is not intrinsic but relational. Each sign derives its meaning from its difference from all the other signs in the language' (Weedon, 1997, p. 23). For example, there is nothing intrinsic in the signifier *homosexual* that gives it its meaning; what gives meaning to *homosexual* is its difference from other signifiers referring to sexual identity, such as heterosexual or transsexual.

Poststructuralism agrees with, but at the same time distances itself from, Saussurean theories. The poststructuralists accept the idea that there is no correspondence between words and things, that signs have no intrinsic

meaning, and find meaning instead in the differences from other signs in the linguistic chain: meaning is thus generated through differences rather than through similarities. However, poststructuralists distance themselves from Saussure because his theory does not explain the presence of different meanings for the same signified; Saussure's theory is logocentric in the sense that 'signs have an already fixed meaning recognized by the self-conscious rational speaking subject' (Weedon, 1997, p. 25). Poststructuralism operates a radical change in Saussure's theory by arguing that the meaning is never fixed forever but is constantly deferred. Jacques Derrida invented the neologism *différance* (with an 'a') to explain that meaning is never stable, but changes constantly, so that the meaning can always be questioned. The word *différance* contains the combined meanings of the words difference and deferral. Therefore, if meaning is always changing and ephemeral, then representation can only be a temporary retrospective that unfortunately fixes the meaning, but we can never know exactly what something means; we can never get to the root of things. The point is that poststructuralism is not interested in 'meaning'; this can never be pinned down and must always be deferred, being always incomplete and lacking an origin.

One of the most influential poststructuralist critiques of language is to be found in Derrida's book *Of grammatology* (1967), which attacks logocentrism as the defining mode of Western thought, based on what he calls a 'metaphysics of presence'. The logic of *presence* refers to a transcendental order which exists in itself and is manifested by ideas such as essence, consciousness, rationality, unified subject, *logos* and so on. Western thought is rooted in this idea of presence: 'a relatively unexamined set of philosophical assumptions underpinning much of the natural and social sciences, in which it is implicitly believed that things and events are unproblematically given to us as fully

present and self-identical in the immediacy of our experiences' (Chia & King, 2001, p. 318). However, things and events are not fully present and it is not true that we can understand them through unmediated experience. The yearning for the 'thing in itself', writes Spivak (1974), is the desire for a *centre* that is transcendent and timeless, which 'spawns hierarchized oppositions. The superior term belongs to presence and the *logos*; the inferior serves its status and marks a fall' (p. lxix).

In *On grammatology*, Derrida elucidates brilliantly how language works because of difference, and not because sign and thing are identical (not because of presence). Again, Spivak explains that '[t]he structure of the sign is determined by the trace or track of that other which is forever absent' (1974, p. xvii) and in this way, Derrida builds the foundations for the undoing of structures (centred on sameness and presence), in short, for *deconstruction*, an approach that has enjoyed great success in poststructuralism and beyond. It should be made abundantly clear that deconstruction is not demolition: it is not a nihilistic or annihilating practice. It should rather be described as a practice of reconstruction in order to understand how a structure, an essence, a centre were built and, above all, what they produce. Deconstruction 'is to dismantle our preconceived notions and expose the absent presence. The absent presence is that which has been ignored in an attempt to preserve the illusion of truth as a perfectly self-contained and self-sufficient present' (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 18).

Deconstruction makes us more aware of how language traps us in binary forms of thought, in categories and in grids of intelligibility, highlighting what we normally pay little attention to, not only in what we read on a page, but also in the text of the 'self' and in organizational and social practices; deconstruction, then, should not be understood in the restrictive sense, as merely a tool for textual analysis or literary criticism. Derrida's

famous saying, 'There is nothing outside of the text' (Derrida, 1967, p. 158), could be taken to mean that the only thing that we should pay attention to is language, but it could also be understood, perhaps more correctly, as meaning that everything is text, or that outside there is another text, other structures and assumptions – we are inseparable from the text through which we constitute ourselves and things.

Derrida stressed that 'deconstruction is not a method' and cannot 'be reduced to some methodological instrumentality or a set of rules and transposable procedures' (Derrida, 1988, p. 4). He later wrote that deconstruction 'is neither a theory nor a philosophy. It is neither a school nor a method. It is not even a discourse, not an act, nor a practice. It is what happens, what is happening today in what they call society, politics, diplomacy, economics, historical reality, and so on' (Malabou & Derrida, 2004, p. 225). A poststructuralist question does not ask what deconstruction means, but what deconstruction does: it puts a structure 'under erasure' (*sous rature*), meaning 'to write a word, cross it out, and then print both word and deletion' (Spivack, 1974, p. xiv). In this sense, we continue to use categories that allow us to describe the world (and organizations), because they seem necessary, but at the same we cross them out because we think they are inadequate. For example, we would write ~~management~~ and ~~organization~~ to make it clear that we are questioning a structure but at the same time not rejecting it. We are working both within and against it.

Deconstruction not only works within and against a structure, but displaces the structure so that something different can be thought and done. If we look at some of the classic (and injurious) categories of Western culture (self/other, man/woman, white/black, Western/Eastern, heterosexual/homosexual), deconstruction begins by reversing the order of the binary, so that in the binary man/woman, for example, women take the privileged position and men feel the discomfort of

being labelled sentimental, weak, irrational and so on. Then the privileged term (man) needs to be displaced and a new one created which can no longer be understood using the original binary (man/woman). In this way, we support a way of thinking in favour of something different happening. This kind of research would be *différance*, not repetition.

One of the main consequences of deconstruction is that it allows us to look at how language does not indicate pre-existing things; it constructs the world we know, meaning that we assign words to the world and there is nothing natural about what we produce, and if the world is constructed through language and cultural practices, then it can be deconstructed and reconstructed. Structures, models and regularities are not necessary and do not pre-exist our capacity to give them a name: they are contingent and open to change. It follows too that we have a great responsibility towards the structures we have constructed. This responsibility cannot be assigned to a presence outside of ourselves which makes us state 'That's how things are', because that would actually be shirking our responsibilities, along with the intellectual and political challenges involved in embracing the ambiguous, contingent nature of human existence. Deconstruction also has ethical aspects, offering new opportunities to rewrite ourselves and our cultural practices, our organizations and the way of life that *we ourselves* have produced, in a never-ending process.

Poststructural theories of language have migrated and influenced management studies and produced subversive analyses of organizations. Jones (2004) has identified three possibilities in the adventure of deconstruction in organization studies: (1) the possibility that deconstruction might be a 'method'; (2) the possibility that deconstruction might be negative or some form of 'critique' and (3) the possibility that deconstruction might result in relativism or 'the indeterminacy of meaning' (p. 36).

POST-QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGIES

Qualitative inquiry in general, and in management and organization studies in particular, is greatly indebted to humanism. For this reason, once the classical humanist structures were undone by poststructural theories, the difficulty for researchers was how to ‘work the ruins’ of qualitative research: ‘Once those philosophical categories have shifted, methodology will shift as well. If humanism’s inscription of reality, knowledge, truth, rationality, and the subject are dangerous fictions, then its “science” also becomes problematic. If this is the case, what might a different science look like?’ (St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000, p. 10).

In recent years, a movement inspired by poststructural theories has entered the arena of qualitative inquiry, seeking to trouble humanistic research assumptions and go beyond *conventional humanistic qualitative research* (St. Pierre, 2011). This disruptive action is aimed at the kind of qualitative research that has become all too predictable in book after book, article after article, conference after conference: it is a reliable and stable structure, and it is also dangerously regulatory. Indeed, qualitative research has become so regulated and standardized that it risks losing the critical mass that characterized its origins. The disruptive movement originated in education studies, in poststructural feminism and in the methodological and epistemological debates surrounding qualitative research, but the field of management and organization studies still seems untouched by these developments.

Scholars have started to deconstruct some of the classic categories of qualitative research, such as *interview* (Scheurich, 1995), *validity* (Lather, 1993) and *data* (St. Pierre, 1997), and more recently, to trouble other keystone concepts: *reflexivity* (Pillow, 2003) and *voice* (Jackson and Mazzei, 2009). Subsequently, post-qualitative

research attracted more interest from scholars working in the qualitative field, because it offered a creative launch-pad for new methodological journeys. Numerous specialist journals have dedicated whole issues specifically to post-qualitative research: (1) *Qualitative Inquiry – Qualitative Data Analysis after Coding* (2014/6); (2) *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies – Data* (2013/4); (3) *The International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education – Post Qualitative Research* (2013/6); and (4) *Qualitative Inquiry – Concept as Method* (2017/9). In addition, approaches like new materialism and posthumanism (Barad, 2007; Braidotti, 2013; Koro-Ljungberg, 2015; Lather, 2013; MacLure, 2013; Massumi, 2002) have made some unexpected words available to research (such as assemblage, entanglement, movement, apparatus, intra-action, diffraction, rhizoanalysis, line of flight, nomadic, affect, event, space-time-matter, onto-epistemology, etc.) which resist attempts to construct yet another clear, consensual regulatory alternative.

The ‘post’ in post-qualitative research can be understood, then, not only as what comes after neopositivism, interpretivism and linguistic turn, but also as the ongoing process of deconstruction, and many of the key concepts of the neopositivist and interpretative frameworks (such as sameness, voice, experience, ‘I’, analysis, coding, data, field, interview, narrative, research design, reflexivity and many more) have been put under erasure using this process. Indeed, they have sometimes been completely abandoned because they tend towards fixity.

Post-qualitative inquiry and methodology cannot be described in precise terms, and much of the methodological rule-following used in conventional qualitative research cannot be used in the post-qualitative field or may seem inadequate. For example, terms such as qualitative, methodology, ethics and so on are labels with no stable identity for post-qualitative scholars and are therefore always, at least in part, becoming. Research

and the work of the researcher thus become something ‘not-yet-thought’, something different. As outlined above, structuralism thinks of difference as difference from something, while Deleuze (1994) urges us to think of difference-in-itself, intent on freeing difference from the dominance of identity by making difference primary, and identity only secondary. This might also be read as meaning that it is *difference* that creates something, rather than *commonality* or *sameness*, or that *difference* is in constant dynamic tension with *commonality* or *sameness*. In this perspective, what a thing *is* fluctuates constantly, so that there is really no *being*, but only *becoming* (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2016).

Post-qualitative theories and the accompanying methodological moves can also be seen as political moves (Lather, 2007) against normative science, especially by scholars interested in experimental ontologies and surprising methodologies. Similarly, when a methodology is seen as changing and ‘becoming’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994) – when it is endowed with elements of the unknown and unanticipated – it seems to offer scholars greater opportunities of openness and creativity.

The task of rethinking qualitative research in general (and research in management studies in particular) is challenging because we are continually pushed back into the past; a past which is also our present. We are all (managers, leaders, followers, researchers, consultants, participants, workers, employers, etc.) the subjects of humanism: it is where we were born and grew up, the land we still inhabit with our bodies, and the language we still speak. The work is arduous, but at least Foucault (1981) has given some advice:

We have to dig deeply to show how things have been historically contingent, for such and such reason intelligible but not necessary. We must make the intelligible appear against a background of emptiness and deny its necessity. We must think that what exists is far from filling all possible spaces. To make a truly unavoidable challenge of the question: What can be played? (pp. 139–40)

Notes

- 1 Lather and St. Pierre (2007) use the term postpositivism to indicate that group of theories that rejects the assumptions of positivism and which may be hereinafter referred to as: neopositivism, interpretivism, critical theory and poststructuralism. Within organization and management studies, we find the use of two terms: postpositivism (Prasad, 2005) and *post-positivism* (Miller, 2000). In the first case, postpositivism is used in its most popular sense, that is, in line with Lather and St. Pierre. In the second case, *post-positivism* is suggested by Miller (2000) to describe a meta-theoretical position, which derives from functionalism (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) or by modernism (Deetz, 1996), that ‘does not require a rejection of realism, objectivity, and the scientific goal of value-free inquiry. However, these scholars do reject the notion of absolute truth, the unassailable foundation of observation, and the assumption of an always steady and upward accumulation of knowledge’ (Miller, 2000, p. 58).
- 2 Poststructuralism implies a rethinking of agency. Once the subject is decentred, he is no longer the free spirit of humanism.
- 3 Weedon describes subjectivity as follows: ‘subjectivity [in poststructuralism] is used to refer to the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her[his] sense of herself[himself] and her[his] ways of understanding her[his] relation to the world’ (Weedon, 1997, p. 32). Subjectivity refers to self-awareness and individuality, and not to an intrinsically human feature present in our personal narratives.

REFERENCES

- Ahonen, P., Tienari, J., Meriläinen, S. & Pullen, A. (2014). Hidden contexts and invisible power relations: A Foucaultian reading of diversity research. *Human Relations*, 67(3), 263–86.
- Althusser, L. (1971). Ideology and ideological state apparatus (notes toward an investigation). In B. Brewster (Trans.), *Lenin and philosophy and other essays by Louis Althusser* (pp. 127–86). New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Alvesson, M., Bridgman, T. & Willmott, H. (2009). *The Oxford handbook of critical management studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Alvesson, M. & Sköldböck, K. (2009). *Reflexive methodologies. New vistas for qualitative research*. 2nd edn. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Baack, D. & Prash, T. (1997). The death of the subject and the life of organization. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 6(2), 131–41.
- Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Barthes, R. (1968). The death of the author. In R. Barthes (Ed.), *Image, music, text* (pp. 142–48). New York: Hill and Wang.
- Benozzo A., Bell H., Koro-Ljungber M. (2013). Moving between nuisance, splinters and secrets as data. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, 13(4), 309–15.
- Benozzo, A., Koro-Ljungberg, M., Carey, N. (2016). Post/authorship: Five or more IKEA customers in search of an author. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 22(7), 568–80.
- Benozzo, A., Pizzorno, C.M., Bell, H. & Koro-Ljungberg, M. (2015). Coming out, but into what? Problematising discursive variations in revealing the gay self in the workplace. *Gender, Work and Organizations*, 22(3), 292–306.
- Boje, D.M., Gephart, R.P. & Thatchenkery, T.J. (1996). *Postmodern management and organization theory*. Sage: London.
- Braidotti, R. (2013). *The posthuman*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Britzman, D. (2000). 'The question of belief': Writing poststructural ethnography. In E. A. St. Pierre & W. Pillow (Eds), *Working the ruins: Feminist poststructural theory and methods in education* (pp. 27–40). New York: Routledge.
- Burrell, G. & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological paradigms and organizational analysis: Elements of the sociology of corporate life*. London: Heinemann.
- Butler, J. (1999). *Gender trouble. Feminism and the subversion of identity. Tenth anniversary edition*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing gender*. New York: Routledge.
- Calás, M.B. & Smircich, L. (1999). Past post-modernism? Reflections and tentative directions. *Academy of Management Review*, 24(4), 649–71.
- Chia, R. (1999). A 'rhizomic' model of organizational change and transformation: Perspective from metaphysics of change. *British Journal of Management*, 10(3), 209–27.
- Chia, R. & King, I. (2001). The language of organization theory. In R. Westwood & S. Linstead (Eds), *The language of organization* (pp. 310–28). London: Sage.
- Collinson, D.L. (2003). Identities and insecurities: Selves at work. *Organization*, 10(3), 527–47.
- Contu, A. (2008). Decaf resistance: On misbehaviour, cynicism and desire in liberal workplaces. *Organization*, 2(2), 160–74.
- Cooper, R. (1986). Organization/disorganization. *Social Science Information*, 25(2), 299–335.
- Cooper, R. & Burrell, G. (1988). Modernism, postmodernism and organizational analysis: An introduction. *Organization Studies*, 9(1), 91–112.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research. Meaning and perspectives in the research process*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- De Cock, C. & Böhm, S. (2007). Liberalist fantasies: Žižek and the impossibility of open society. *Organization*, 14(6), 815–36.
- Deetz, S. (1996). Crossroads—Describing differences in approaches to organization science: Rethinking Burrell and Morgan and their legacy. *Organization Science*, 7(2), 191–207.
- Deleuze, G. (1994). *Difference and repetition*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1994). *What is philosophy?* New York: Columbia University Press.
- Derrida, J. (1967). *Of grammatology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Derrida, J. (1988). Letter to a Japanese friend. In D. Wood & R. Bernasconi (Eds.) *Derrida and différance* (pp. 1–5). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- de Saussure, F. (1916) *Course in general linguistics*. London: Fontana.
- Fleming, P. (2007). Sexuality, power and resistance in the workplace. *Organization Studies*, 28(2), 239–56.
- Ford, J. (2006). Discourses of leadership: Gender, identities and contradictions in a UK public sector organization. *Leadership*, 2(1), 77–99.

- Foucault, M. (1966). *The order of things*. London: Tavistock.
- Foucault, M. (1969a). 'What is an author?' In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *Foucault reader* (pp. 101–20). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1969b). *The archaeology of knowledge*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish*. Harmondsworth: Peregrine Books.
- Foucault, M. (1981). Friendship as a way of life. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *M. Foucault, ethics, subjectivity and truth* (pp. 135–49). New York: New press.
- Foucault, M. (1983). The subject and power. In H.L. Dreyfus & P. Rabinow (Eds), *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics* (pp. 208–28) 2nd edn. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Gherardi, S. (2016). To start practice theorizing anew: The contribution of the concepts of *agencement* and formativeness. *Organization*, 23(5), 680–98.
- Halperin, D.M. (1995). *Saint Foucault. Towards a gay hagiography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harding, N., Lee, H., Ford, J. & Learmonth, M. (2011). Leadership and charisma: A desire that cannot speak its name? *Human Relations*, 64(7), 927–49.
- Harré, R. & Moghaddam, F. (2013). Positioning theory. In T. Bozatzis & N. Dragonas (Eds), *The discursive turn in social psychology* (pp. 131–40). Chagrin Fall: Tao Institute Publication.
- Hassard, J. & Parker, M. (1993). *Postmodernism and organizations*. London: Sage.
- Henriques, J., Hollway, W., Urwin, C., Venn, C. & Walkerdine, V. (1984). *Changing the subject. Psychology, social regulation and subjectivity*. London: Routledge.
- Jackson, A.Y. & Mazzei, L.A. (2009). *Voice in qualitative research: Challenging conventional, interpretive, and critical conceptions in qualitative research*. London: Routledge.
- Jackson, A.Y. & Mazzei, L.A. (2012). *Thinking with theory in qualitative research. Viewing data across different perspectives*. London: Routledge.
- Jones, C. (2004). Jacques Derrida. In S. Linstead (Ed.), *Organization theory and postmodern thought* (pp. 34–63). London: Sage.
- Jones, C. (2009). Poststructuralism in critical management studies. In M. Alvesson, T. Bridgman, & H. Willmott, *The Oxford handbook of critical management studies* (pp. 76–98). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Knights, D. (2009). Power at work in organizations. In M. Alvesson, T. Bridgman & H. Willmott, *The Oxford handbook of critical management studies* (pp. 76–98). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Koro-Ljungberg, M. (2015). *Reconceptualizing qualitative research. Methodologies without methodology*. London: Sage.
- Koro-Ljungberg, M., Carey, N. & Benozzo, A. (2016). 'Post-qualitative' methodologies (of difference). Conference Stream at the 9th Biennial Gender, Work and Organization Conference at Keele University, UK, June 28–July 1, 2016.
- Lather, P. (1993). Fertile obsession: Validity after poststructuralism. *Sociological Quarterly*, 34(4), 673–93.
- Lather, P. (2007). *Getting lost: Feminist efforts toward a double(d) science*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Lather, P. (2013). Methodology-21: What do we do in the afterward? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 26(6), 634–45.
- Lather, P. & St. Pierre, E. (2007). Postpositivist new paradigm inquiry. In P. Lather, *Getting lost: Feminist efforts toward a double(d) science* (p. 164). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Linstead, S. (2004). *Organization theory and postmodern thought*. London: Sage.
- Linstead, S. & Thanem, T. (2007). Multiplicity, virtuality and organization: The contribution of Gilles Deleuze. *Organization Studies*, 28(10), 1483–501.
- Lyotard, J.-F. (1979). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- MacLure, M. (2013). Researching without representation? Language and materiality in post-qualitative methodology. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 26(6), 658–67.
- Malabou, C. & Derrida, J. (2004). *Counterpath: Traveling with Jacques Derrida*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Mascaretti, G. (2013). Book Review – Michel Foucault – Sull'origine dell'Ermeneutica del sé'. *Dianoia*, 18, 366–71.

- Massumi, B. (2002). *Parables for the virtual: Movement, affect, sensation*. Durham, SC: Duke University Press.
- Miller, K.I. (2000). Common ground from the post-positivist perspective: From 'Straw Person' argument to collaborative coexistence. In S. R. Corman & M. Scott Poole (Eds.), *Perspectives on Organizational Communication* (pp. 46–67). New York: The Guildford Press.
- Parker, I. & The Bolton Discourse Network (1999). *Critical Textwork: An introduction to varieties of discourse and analysis*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Pillow, W.S. (2003). Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(2), 175–96.
- Pizzorno, M.C., Benozzo, A. & Carey, N. (2015). Narrating career, positioning identity and constructing identity. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 88, 195–204.
- Prasad, P. (2005). *Crafting qualitative research. Working in the postpositivist traditions*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.
- Prasad, A. (2012). Beyond analytical dichotomies. *Human Relations*, 65(5), 567–95.
- Sarup, M. (1993). *An introductory guide to post-structuralism and postmodernism*. 2nd edn. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Scheurich, J.J. (1995). A postmodernist critique of research interviewing. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8(3), 239–52.
- Schwandt, T.A. (2000). Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry: Interpretivism, hermeneutics, and social constructionism. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds), *Handbook of qualitative research*. 2nd edn (pp. 189–213). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Spivak, G.C. (1974). Translator's preface. In J. Derrida *Of grammatology* (G.C. Spivack, Trans.) (pp. ix–xc). Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.
- St. Pierre, E. (1997). Methodology in the fold and the irruption of transgressive data. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 10(2), 175–89.
- St. Pierre, E. (2011). Post qualitative research: The critique and the coming after. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research 4th edn*. (pp. 611–25). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- St. Pierre, E. & Pillow, W. (2000). *Working the ruins. Feminist poststructural theory and methods in education*. New York: Routledge.
- Vidaillet, B. (2007). Lacanian theory's contribution to the study of workplace envy. *Human Relations*, 60(11), 1669–700.
- Weedom, C. (1997). *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory*, 2nd edn. Oxford: Basic Blackwell.
- Williams, J. (2005). *Understanding poststructuralism*. Stocksfield: Acumen Publishing Limited.
- Willmott, H. (2005). Theorizing contemporary control: Some post-structuralist responses to some critical realist questions. *Organization*, 12(5), 747–80.
- Wolin, R. (1992). *The terms of cultural criticism: The Frankfurt School, existentialism, poststructuralism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Mixed Methods

Jose F. Molina-Azorin

INTRODUCTION

The choice between quantitative or qualitative methods has been the subject of controversy in business and management research. Although business and management researchers employ both qualitative and quantitative approaches, the use of large sample, quantitatively operationalized research designs dominates (Phelan et al., 2002; Molina-Azorin, 2011). There are some differences between the European, more pluralistic, tradition, and its acceptance of qualitative research, and that of North America. For example, in the field of entrepreneurship research, Molina-Azorin et al. (2012) found that in the *Journal of Business Venturing* and *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, two leading US-based entrepreneurship journals, 12 per cent and 8 per cent were qualitative papers, respectively. However, in *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, a leading European journal in this field, 36 per cent

were qualitative studies. In any case, for these three journals, and for most other business and management journals, quantitative designs dominate.

Although the use of qualitative methods has lagged behind the use of quantitative approaches, significant contributions to management theory and practice have also come from qualitative studies (Barr, 2004; Cassell & Symon, 2006). Moreover, an important methodological trend is to integrate qualitative and quantitative research methods in the same study; that is, to employ a mixed methods approach (Molina-Azorin, 2007). The issue need not be quantitative versus qualitative methods, but rather how to combine the strengths of each in a mixed methods approach.

Although researchers have combined qualitative and quantitative data for many years, current conceptualizations of mixed methods research did not emerge until the 1980s (Bryman, 1988; Greene et al., 1989). Mixed methods research has developed rapidly in

these last few years, emerging as a research methodology with a recognized name and distinct identity ((Denscombe, 2008), especially in some fields such as education, health sciences, psychology and sociology. In these fields, this methodological approach is becoming increasingly articulated and recognized as the third methodological movement, along with qualitative research and quantitative research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Scholars from these fields have published specific books on mixed methods research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Niglas, 2004; Mertens, 2005; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Greene, 2007; Andrew & Halcomb, 2009; Morse & Niehaus, 2009; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Creswell, 2015; Curry & Nunez-Smith, 2015; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016).

However, the attention devoted to mixed methods in our business and management field has been relatively low in comparison to the disciplines from within the social and behavioural sciences identified previously as championing the mixed methods movement. For example, at the moment, there is not any specific book on mixed methods research published in our field. In addition, although there are articles that have used a mixed methods approach, the expression 'mixed methods' is not usually used in the title of these mixed methods studies. Furthermore, the literature base of this methodological approach is rarely included in the references sections of mixed methods articles published in business and management journals (Molina-Azorin, 2011). On this evidence, it seems likely that the terminology, advantages, purposes and designs of mixed methods research may be unknown to business and management researchers, and consequently our field may not exploit the full potential for mixing methods. Therefore, we have much to learn about this methodological approach from other fields.

The use of mixed methods research in business and management may play an important

role in the development of our field because results obtained from different methods have the potential to enrich our understanding of business and management problems and questions. In fact, there are calls for using mixed methods in business and management research (Jick, 1979; Hitt et al., 1998; Lee, 1999; Currall & Towler, 2003; Armstrong & Shimizu, 2007; Edmondson & McManus, 2007; Molina-Azorin, 2007, 2011, 2012; Molina-Azorin & Cameron, 2015; Molina-Azorin & Lopez-Gamero, 2016), but more knowledge about this methodological approach is needed in our field.

The aim of this chapter is to examine the main characteristics of mixed methods research. An important objective of this paper is to help business and management scholars to become more familiar with mixed methods research, studying why and how to use this approach. This chapter may be relevant for researchers who want models of how other scholars effectively apply this approach. Thus, several examples of mixed methods studies published in our field in three important journals (*Academy of Management Journal*, *Strategic Management Journal* and *Journal of Organizational Behavior*) are examined. In addition, recommendations regarding the adequate application of mixed methods research are indicated.

This chapter is organized as follows. First, the foundations and main characteristics of mixed methods research are indicated, emphasizing why and how to conduct a mixed methods study. Next, several examples in the business and management field that use a mixed methods approach are examined. Finally, the last sections offer some implications and recommendations, and a summary of the main conclusions.

MIXED METHODS RESEARCH

In this section, several important aspects, characteristics and methodological advances in mixed methods research that have been

made by other fields are examined. Specifically, definition, barriers to conducting this type of research, purposes, types of designs and philosophical positions are described.

Definition of Mixed Methods Research

Greene et al. (1989) defined mixed methods designs as those that include at least one quantitative method (designed to collect numbers) and one qualitative method (designed to collect non-numeric data). Tashakkori & Teddlie (1998) pointed out that mixed methods studies are those that combine the qualitative and quantitative approaches into the research methodology of a single study. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) indicated that mixed methods research is the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study. Plano Clark (2005) stated that mixed methods research combines qualitative and quantitative data collection and data analysis within a single study.

Johnson et al. (2007) asked 21 researchers to define mixed methods and obtained 19 definitions. These definitions differed in terms of what was being mixed (methods or methodologies), the stage of the research process in which mixing occurred (data collection, data analysis, inferences) and the purpose for mixing (breadth, corroboration). As a result of their review, these authors offered a composite and broad definition (Johnson et al., p. 123): mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g. the use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration. These authors indicated a continuum of several types of mixed methods studies, with

the identification of pure mixed, qualitative dominant and quantitative dominant as the three types that fall into their mixed methods definition.

Barriers to Conducting Mixed Methods Research

There are several barriers to carrying out mixed methods studies (Plano Clark, 2005; Bryman, 2007; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Mixed methods studies require extensive time, resources and effort, and researchers must develop a broader set of skills. Creswell & Plano Clark (2007) pointed out that conducting mixed methods research is not easy. Mixed methods studies are a challenge because they are perceived as requiring more work and financial resources, and they take more time. Increased time demands arise from the time it takes to implement the quantitative and qualitative parts of the study (Niglas, 2004).

In addition, mixed methods research also requires that researchers develop a broader set of skills that span both the quantitative and the qualitative. Many scholars have specialized in their research training in either a predominantly quantitative or qualitative tradition, and this issue may militate against the application of mixed methods studies. One way to overcoming this limitation in trained capacities of researchers that might hinder their ability or inclination to conduct mixed methods research is to develop teams than can bring together specialists in both kinds of methods. However, the presence of skill specialisms may lead to compartmentalization of roles and responsibilities that can hinder the integration of findings (Bryman, 2007).

Another barrier is related to the challenges of publishing mixed methods studies. In this case, researchers face two kinds of problems (Plano Clark, 2005; Bryman, 2007). One is the tendency for some journals to be known to have a methodological bias toward either quantitative or qualitative research and,

consequently, researchers may believe that the presence of such a bias limits their ability to publish mixed methods studies. The other is that the need to describe and discuss two sets of data collection, data analysis and findings may make it difficult to publish mixed methods studies due to the word and page restrictions that journals impose on authors.

Benefits and Purposes of Mixed Methods Research

Taking into account previous barriers to conducting mixed methods research, is it worth our time and effort to carry out mixed methods studies? Some benefits and advantages of mixed methods research can be indicated. The overall purpose and central premise of mixed methods studies is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems and complex phenomena than either approach alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Better understanding can be obtained, for example, by triangulating one set of results with another and thereby enhancing the validity of inferences. In fact, the concept of the triangulation of methods was the intellectual wedge that eventually broke the methodological hegemony of the monomethod purists (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Jick (1979) discussed triangulation in terms of the weaknesses of one method being offset by the strengths of another. It is often stressed that different methods have different weaknesses and strengths, and therefore the main effect triangulation can offer is to overcome the weaknesses of any single method. Thus, if we use several different methods for investigating the phenomenon of our interest, and the results provide mutual confirmation, we can be more sure that our results are valid (Niglas, 2004).

Other purposes, reasons or rationales for combining qualitative and quantitative methods can be pointed out. Greene et al. (1989) highlight other additional purposes along

with triangulation: complementarity (elaboration or clarification of the results from one method with the findings from the other method), development (when the researcher uses the results from one method to help develop the use of the other method) and expansion (seeking to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components).

Bryman & Bell (2015) also present a wide variety of purposes for mixed methods research: triangulation (the findings from one method are cross-checked against the results deriving from the other type); qualitative research facilitates quantitative research (providing hypotheses or informing the design of survey questions); quantitative research facilitates qualitative research (preparing the ground for qualitative research through the selection of people to be interviewed, or companies to be selected as case studies); static and procedural features (quantitative research can study the static features and regularities of a phenomenon and qualitative research can focus on more procedural characteristics); qualitative research may facilitate the interpretation of the relationship between variables (a qualitative study can be used to help explain the factors underlying the broad relationships that are established in the quantitative part); and analysis of different aspects of a phenomenon (for example, the relationship between macro and micro levels, or different stages of a longitudinal study).

Saunders et al. (2016) also indicate other reasons for using a mixed methods design: generalizability (use of mixed methods may help to establish the generalizability of a study, its relative importance or its credibility); diversity (use of mixed methods may allow for a greater diversity of views to inform and be reflected in the study); problem solving (use of an alternative method may help when the initial method reveals unexplainable results or insufficient data); and confidence (as findings may be affected by the method used, use of a single method

may make it impossible to ascertain the nature of an effect).

Mixed Methods Designs

A key aspect related to the use of mixed methods research is the type of design; that is, how to conduct a mixed methods study. There are two main factors that help researchers to determine the type of mixed methods design that is best suited to their study: priority and implementation of data collection (Morse, 1991; Morgan, 1998; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Creswell, 2003).

Regarding priority, the mixed methods researcher can give equal priority to both quantitative and qualitative parts, emphasize qualitative more, or emphasize quantitative more. This emphasis may result from the research question, from practical constraints on data collection, from the need to understand one form of data before proceeding to the next, or from the presumed preference of the intended audience. Mixed methods designs can therefore be divided into equivalent status designs (the researcher conducts the study using both the quantitative and the qualitative approaches, roughly equally, to understand the phenomenon under study) and dominant–less dominant studies (the researcher conducts the study with a dominant method and a small component of the other method).

Implementation of data collection refers to the sequence the researcher uses to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The options consist of gathering the information at the same time (concurrent, simultaneous or parallel design) or introducing the information in phases (sequential or two-phase design). In gathering both forms of data concurrently, the researcher may seek to compare them to search for congruent findings. When the data are introduced in phases, either the qualitative or the quantitative approach may be gathered first, but the sequence relates to the objectives of the researcher. Thus, when

qualitative data collection precedes quantitative data collection, the intention may be to first explore the problem being studied and then to follow up on this exploration with quantitative data that are amenable to being studied as a large sample, so that the results can be applied to a population. Alternatively, when quantitative data precede qualitative data, the intention may be to test variables with a large sample and then to explore in more depth with a few cases during the qualitative phase.

These two dimensions and their possible combinations can lead to the establishment of several designs which are represented using the notation proposed by Morse (1991). In her system, the main or dominant method appears in capital letters (QUAN, QUAL) while the complementary method is in lower case letters (quan, qual). The notation ‘+’ is used to indicate a simultaneous design, and the arrow ‘→’ stands for sequential design. Thus, the following four groups of mixed methods designs and nine types of design can exist using these two dimensions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004):

- 1 Equivalent status/simultaneous design: QUAL+QUAN.
- 2 Equivalent status/sequential designs: QUAL→QUAN; QUAN→QUAL.
- 3 Dominant/simultaneous designs: QUAL+quan; QUAN+qual.
- 4 Dominant/sequential designs: qual→QUAN; QUAL→quan; quan→QUAL; QUAN→qual.

There are other classifications of mixed methods designs. Thus, three main types of mixed methods designs are triangulation, exploratory and explanatory designs (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The purpose of a triangulation mixed methods design is to simultaneously collect both quantitative and qualitative data, merge the data, and use the results to understand a research problem. The researcher gathers both quantitative and qualitative data, compares results from the analysis of both types of data, and makes an interpretation as to whether the results from

both support or contradict each other. The triangulation design is usually a one-phase design in which researchers implement the quantitative and qualitative methods during the same time frame and with equal weight. It generally involves the concurrent, but separate, collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data so that the researcher may best understand the research problem.

The purpose of an exploratory mixed methods design is the procedure of first gathering qualitative data to explore a phenomenon, and then collecting quantitative data to explain relationships found in the qualitative data. Therefore, this design is a two-phase (sequential) mixed methods design. In this case, the results of the first method (qualitative) can help develop or inform the second method (quantitative). This design is based on the premise that an exploration is needed for one of several reasons: measures or instruments are not available, the variables are unknown, or there is no guiding framework or theory. Therefore, researchers use this design when existing instruments, variables and measures may not be known or available for the population or context under study. It is also appropriate when a researcher wants to generalize results to different groups, to test aspects of an emergent theory or to explore a phenomenon in depth and then measure its prevalence.

The explanatory design is also a two-phase, mixed methods design and it consists of first collecting quantitative data and then collecting qualitative data to help explain or elaborate on the quantitative results. This design starts with the collection and analysis of quantitative data. The second, qualitative phase of the study is designed so that it follows from the results of the first quantitative phase. The rationale of this approach is that the quantitative data and results provide a general picture of the research problem, but more analysis through qualitative data collection is needed to refine, extend or explain the general picture. For example, this design is well-suited to a study in which a researcher

needs qualitative data to explain significant (or non-significant) results, outlier results, or surprising findings. This design can also be used when a researcher wants to form groups based on quantitative results and follow up with the groups through subsequent qualitative research or to use quantitative participant characteristics to guide purposeful sampling for a qualitative phase. In sum, there are two main variants of the explanatory design: the follow-up explanations design and the participant selection design. Although both models have an initial quantitative phase followed by a qualitative phase, they differ in the connection of the two phases, with one focusing on results to be examined in more detail and the other on the appropriate participants to be selected.

Mixed Methods Research and Philosophical Positions

The advocates of pure quantitative and pure qualitative approaches have engaged in ardent dispute (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Several debates, or paradigm 'wars', (Datta, 1994) have raged in the social sciences regarding the superiority of one or the other of the two major social science paradigms: the positivist approach and the constructivist (interpretivist or naturalistic) orientation (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). Another important aspect examined in those debates has been the idea of incommensurability and incompatibility, which means that qualitative and quantitative approaches could/should not be used in the context of the same study. This idea is based on the fact that there are quite different epistemological and ontological assumptions that underpin different paradigms and methods.

However, 'pacifists' have appeared who state that qualitative and quantitative methods are compatible. Reichardt & Cook (1979) countered the incompatibility thesis based on the paradigm-method fit by suggesting that different philosophical paradigms and

methods are compatible. Moreover, these authors argued that paradigms and methods are not inherently linked. Therefore, qualitative and quantitative methods can be combined within the philosophical paradigms. Moreover, the increasing use and application of mixed methods in several fields reflects this possibility of the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods.

As indicated by Saunders et al. (2016), there are two philosophical positions that often lead to mixed methods research designs: critical realism (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010) and pragmatism (Morgan, 2007; Biesta, 2010). Critical realists believe that while there is an external, objective reality to the world in which we live (realist ontology), the way in which each of us interprets and understands it will be affected by our social conditioning (interpretivist epistemology). Thus, for example, a researcher may use quantitative analysis of officially published data followed by qualitative research methods to explore perceptions. For pragmatists, the nature of the research question, the research context and likely research consequences are driving forces determining the most appropriate methodological choice. Both quantitative and qualitative research are valued by pragmatists and the exact choice will be contingent on the nature of the research.

Together with critical realism and pragmatism, Shannon-Baker (2016) also analyses two additional paradigmatic perspectives discussed in mixed methods literature: transformative-emancipation and dialectics. Mertens (2007, 2010) argues for adopting specific goals for research, which can be done by utilizing the transformative-emancipatory perspective. This perspective is characterized by the intentional collaboration with minority and marginalized groups or those whose voice is not typically heard on particular issues. Regarding dialectics (Greene & Hall, 2010; Johnson, 2017), this approach argues for using two or more paradigms together. Thus, a dialectic perspective brings together two or more paradigms in respectful dialogue

with one another throughout the research process. The emphasis is not in joining the two, but instead focuses on the tensions and new understandings that arise.

EXAMPLES OF MIXED METHODS STUDIES

To analyse the application of mixed methods in business and management research, a reading of articles published in the *Academy of Management Journal* (AMJ), *Strategic Management Journal* (SMJ) and *Journal of Organizational Behavior* (JOB) has been carried out in order to identify some mixed methods articles. AMJ is one of the most important empirical journals in our field that publishes studies in several management areas. SMJ also enjoys a reputation as a leader among management journals and focuses mainly on a macro management topic (strategy). Finally, JOB is one of the most important journals about a micro topic (organizational behaviour). The intention was to identify papers of broad interest to business and management scholars in a variety of speciality areas in the management field that can serve as examples of why and how mixed methods research is used. Therefore, several mixed methods studies are described, emphasizing the methodological characteristics regarding the mixed methods approach used (purposes, design, combination of methods, main aspects of the quantitative and qualitative methods) rather than the specific findings of each study.

In the *Academy of Management Journal*, Grant et al. (2014) used a QUAL→QUAN exploratory design to analyse the psychological implications of self-reflective job titles. The authors combined inductive qualitative and deductive experimental methods. Specifically, in the first phase, the purpose was to build theory through a qualitative study. The authors gathered three different sources of qualitative data. First, using a

semistructured interview protocol, they conducted 22 interviews with Midwest staff members, as well as the president and CEO, board chair and several affiliated outsiders. Second, they conducted 23 hours of observation, which included attending staff meetings and events as well as observing employees carrying out daily tasks. Third, they also obtained over 100 archival documents, including mission statements, chapter newsletters, event invitations, weblogs, and meeting announcements and agendas. Regarding data analysis in this qualitative stage, the authors used an inductive analytic approach that involved taking iterative steps between the data, existing literature and a developing set of theoretical ideas. They developed a general conceptual model and a set of theoretical propositions to explain patterns gleaned from the data. In the second phase (the quantitative part), the aim was to close the loop in full-cycle research by moving from theory building to theory testing. They designed a quasi-experiment to examine and test the propositions in the context of a health care system. Therefore, the mixed methods purpose was development, as the qualitative part developed the theoretical propositions (finding of this qualitative part) that then were tested in the quantitative part.

Grant et al. (2008) used this QUAL→QUAN exploratory design with the purpose of development to examine the relationship between employee support programmes and affective organizational commitment. The qualitative part, through 40 semistructured interviews, helped to construct and elaborate theory. Thus, the authors developed hypotheses in this first qualitative part that then were tested with the second, quantitative stage. In a similar way, Zellmer-Bruhn & Gibson (2006), in their study about the implications of a multinational organization context for team learning and performance, also used a design with a first qualitative part and a second quantitative part with the purpose of development. As they noted, to develop the surveys used for this study and to understand the contexts of the firms, they first interviewed a sample of

107 individuals, and then they carried out the quantitative part.

Anand & Watson (2004) used a QUAL+quan mixed methods design with the main purpose of triangulation to study how award ceremony rituals influence organizational field evolution through critical processes. As they indicated, while the approach was primarily qualitative, relying on content analysis of texts in trade periodicals, they also used quantitative data and statistical methods to underscore the significance of their findings, trying to confirm the qualitative results. However, in the study by Lavie et al. (2007) the main part is the quantitative one, as they employed a QUAN→qual mixed methods explanatory design, with the purpose of complementarity, in their analysis of the performance implications of timing on entry and involvement in multipartner alliances. As the authors emphasized, they elaborated their main quantitative research design via 12 personal interviews. The qualitative analysis of interview transcripts enabled them to gain insights into the causal mechanisms that drove their quantitative empirical results and assisted in the interpretation of these quantitative findings.

In the field of strategy, several articles published in the *Strategic Management Journal* that use and advocate a mixed methods approach have also been found. For example, an example of a QUAL→QUAN design (sequential exploratory, equivalent status) with a mixed methods purpose of development is the article by Sharma & Vredenburg (1998) about the relationship between environmental strategy and the development of competitive organizational capabilities. These authors carried out a study conducted in two phases within a single industry context (the oil and gas industry). The first phase (exploratory) involved comparative case studies through in-depth interviews in seven firms in the Canadian oil and gas industry to ground the resource-based view of the firm within the domain of corporate environmental responsiveness. Interview

data were triangulated through a qualitative content analysis of corporate public documents such as annual reports, environmental reports, company newsletters and newspaper reports. This exploratory study was intended to examine linkages between environmental strategies and the development of capabilities, and understand the nature of any emergent capabilities and their competitive outcomes. The first phase ended with two hypotheses based on previous literature and this qualitative study. The second phase (confirmatory) involved testing the emergent linkages through a mail survey-based study of the Canadian oil and gas industry. The final written report was structured in two main parts: the exploratory study included several sections (qualitative data collection, qualitative data analysis and results with the proposed hypotheses) and then the confirmatory study was carried out (with a quantitative data collection, quantitative analysis section and results). The qualitative phase assisted in understanding the industry, and in developing the theory, hypotheses and measurement instrument. Therefore, this study used a sequential exploratory mixed methods design. Regarding the issue of integration, in this study the authors integrated the qualitative and quantitative parts by connecting the findings of the first qualitative part to the beginning of the quantitative phase. Therefore, the quantitative part was built on the qualitative phase.

Yeoh & Roth (1999) is an illustrative example of a qual→QUAN design, and they tested a model of the relationships among firm resources, firm capabilities and sustained competitive advantage in the US pharmaceutical industry. They carried out a quantitative analysis, though they explained that the variables and their measurements used in the quantitative analysis were determined through a qualitative, two-stage process. First, the secondary literature was reviewed to determine the resources and capabilities that are important for competition in this industry. The second stage involved interviews with product

and marketing managers at several pharmaceutical companies, as well as with industry experts. In these interviews, informants were requested to identify the types of capabilities they felt were critical for future success in the industry. Thus, this qualitative phase helped to carry out the quantitative study, which is the dominant part of the article. Additionally, and contrary to what was done by Sharma & Vredenburg (1998), the qualitative part does not appear in such a deep, systematic and methodical way, without constructing any sets of in-depth cases.

Dyer & Hatch (2006) is an example of the QUAN→QUAL design. Their study examined the role of network knowledge resources in influencing firm performance, using a sample of US automotive suppliers selling to both Toyota and US car makers. From a point of view of mixed methods research, the authors indicated the dual nature of the research investigation. The first objective was to empirically examine the relationship between customer-to-supplier, knowledge-sharing activities and the rate of improvement in supplier network performance. Thus, this quantitative part tested the hypothesis that a buyer that provides greater knowledge transfers to its supplier network will develop the suppliers' production capabilities such that the suppliers' operations for that buyer will be more productive. Through a survey, the findings confirmed that Toyota's supplier network does produce components of higher quality and at lower cost for Toyota than for their largest US customers.

The second objective (qualitative) was to explore why the supplier performs better as a member of one network (i.e. Toyota's) than another network (i.e. GM, Ford or Chrysler). Interviews were done at 13 suppliers to explore quantitative results and analyse this second objective. In this study, the authors used different methods to assess different facets of a phenomenon, yielding an enriched, elaborated understanding of that phenomenon. The second, qualitative part helps explain and clarify the findings of the

first, quantitative phase. Therefore, this study uses one of the two variants of the mixed methods explanatory design, namely, the follow-up explanations design.

The other variant of the explanatory design is the participant selection design. Rouse & Daellenbach (1999) advocate a QUAN→QUAL design (sequential explanatory, equivalent status), through this variant of participant selection design, to determine the most valuable resources in a specific industry. These authors emphasize the importance of qualitative research to stimulate and guide future studies of resource-based competitive advantage. Their framework begins with a quantitative four-step firm selection process: (1) selection of a single industry; (2) clustering firms by strategic type or group within this industry; (3) comparing performance indices within strategic groups and (4) identifying those firms within each strategic group that are the high and low performers. Then, in a second qualitative phase, these firms would be selected as research subjects and would be analysed using in-depth fieldwork or ethnographic study methods; that is, a qualitative approach. Given the contention that sustainable competitive advantages are organizational in origin, tacit, highly inimitable, socially complex, embedded in process and often driven by culture, there can be no other way to obtain the data of interest than using a qualitative orientation. Fieldwork which takes the researcher into the organization is essential to gain an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the organization and its processes. Therefore, in this mixed methods explanatory design through the variant of participation selection design, the researchers would form groups based on quantitative aspects, using these quantitative participant characteristics to guide purposeful sampling for a next qualitative phase.

In the field of organizational behaviour, some mixed methods studies have also been identified in the *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. For example, Challiol & Mignonac (2005), using a QUAN+QUAL design,

presented the results of two empirical studies related to the geographical mobility of employees. Specifically, this paper focuses on the relocation decision-making processes of dual-earner couples. The objective is to gain a better understanding of the complex process of this relocation decision-making, and for this reason the authors indicate that two empirical studies, one quantitative and one qualitative, with two independent samples, were carried out. The first study is a quantitative survey of 155 management-level employees and focuses on the variables likely to moderate the influence of the spouse (partner) on the probability of accepting or turning down geographical mobility. This quantitative part attempts to establish whether the spouse's attitude toward mobility unconditionally influences the employee's likelihood of accepting a relocation opportunity or whether it varies in function as a result of various factors. Specifically, willingness to relocate is the dependent variable, and other variables are used as moderators and independent measures, such as marital quality, perceived job alternatives for the spouse, the spouse's career priority, the spouse's willingness to relocate and the employee's relative contribution to household income. Hypotheses are tested using a moderated hierarchical multiple regression procedure. The second study is qualitative, consisting of 11 in-depth interviews of dual-earner couples within which one of the partners had been required to decide whether to accept relocation or not. It complements the first study by providing a perspective on the initial results and attempting to identify and isolate the dynamics within the couple when making relocation decisions. The authors indicated that this second study constituted both triangulation across methods (reconciling qualitative and quantitative data) and complementarity by examining overlapping and different facets of a phenomenon.

Lilius et al. (2008) carried out a QUAN→QUAL study about the contours and consequences of compassion at work. In the first quantitative stage, the authors conducted a pilot survey that captures the nature

of compassion at work and its relationship to positive emotion and affective commitment. The qualitative part is a narrative study that reveals a wide range of compassion triggers and it illuminates ways that work colleagues respond to suffering. This narrative analysis demonstrates that experienced compassion provides important sense-making occasions where employees who receive, witness or participate in the delivery of compassion reshape understandings of their co-workers, themselves and their organizations. As indicated by the authors, these combined methods portray a deepened image of the kinds of suffering experienced, and responses offered, in the workplace. Therefore, the authors take advantage of the mixed methods purposes of complementarity and expansion.

Some mixed methods studies include more than two phases. For example, Jones & Martens (2009) published a mixed methods article with three phases. Specifically, these authors used a QUAN→QUAN→QUAL design to examine the mediating role of overall fairness and the moderating role of trust certainty in justice-criteria relationships. The first two phases were quantitative, and here the authors derived hypotheses from fairness heuristic theory, which proposes that perceptions of overall fairness are influenced by different types of justice and are used to infer trust when trust certainty is low. The first quantitative part showed that employees' perceptions of overall fairness in relation to a senior management team mediated the relationships between specific types of justice and employee outcomes. In the second quantitative part, these mediated effects were replicated and trust certainty moderated the effect of overall fairness on trust. Finally, the last qualitative part, through a content analysis, explored how the organizational context may have influenced the quantitative findings of the second quantitative study. Therefore, a purpose of complementarity was achieved through this last qualitative part.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As stated above, other social science fields have more of a tradition of using and analysing the application of mixed methods research, and therefore it is important to consider what organizational scholars could learn from their experience. Knowledge of the literature base of mixed methods research and analysis of empirical papers that use a mixed methods approach will help business and management scholars to design and conduct this type of study. Next, some recommendations and implications regarding the application of mixed methods research are examined.

An important challenge for mixed methods studies in management research is the explicit clarification of several relevant aspects in the written report (Creswell et al., 2003). Thus, in relation to data collection, the implementation decision calls for clearly identifying the core reasons for collecting both forms of data (quantitative and qualitative), and understanding the important interrelationship between the quantitative and qualitative phases in data collection. Moreover, the choice of implementation strategy has consequences for the form of the final report. Thus, when two phases of data collection exist, the researcher can report the data collection process in two phases. The report may also include an analysis of each phase separately and the integration of information in the discussion or conclusion section of a study. In relation to priority, researchers need to make informed decisions about the weight or attention given to quantitative and qualitative research during all phases of their research. In the final written report, a project might be seen as providing more depth for one method than for the other through the length of discussions.

Some authors provide guidelines and recommendations about how to carry out a mixed methods research. Creswell (1999)

offers nine steps in conducting a mixed methods study: (1) determine if a mixed methods study is needed to study the problem; (2) consider whether a mixed methods study is feasible; (3) write both qualitative and quantitative research questions; (4) review and decide on the types of data collection; (5) assess the relative weight and implementation strategy for each method; (6) present a visual model; (7) determine how the data will be analysed; (8) assess the criteria for evaluating the study and (9) develop a plan for the study.

Similarly, Teddlie & Tashakkori (2006) provide a seven-step process for researchers selecting the best design for their projects: (1) the researcher must first determine if his/her research question requires a mono-method or mixed methods design; (2) the researcher should be aware that there are a number of different typologies of mixed methods research designs and should know how to access details regarding them; (3) the researcher should select the best mixed methods design for his/her particular study and assume that one of the published typologies includes the right design for the project; (4) typologies may be differentiated by the criteria that are used to distinguish among the research designs within them, and the researcher needs to know those criteria; (5) these criteria should be listed by the researcher, who may then select the criteria that are most important for the particular study he/she is designing; (6) the researcher then applies the selected criteria to potential designs, ultimately selecting the best research design; and (7) in some cases, the researcher may have to develop a new mixed methods design, because no one best design exists for his/her research project.

Regarding the last step, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2006) point out that mixed methods designs have an opportunistic nature. Thus, in many cases, a mixed methods research study may have a predetermined research design, but new components of the design may evolve as researchers follow up on leads that develop as data are collected

and analysed. These opportunistic designs may be different from those contained in previously published typologies. The point is for the researcher to be creative and not limited by the existing designs. A design may emerge during a study in new ways, depending on the conditions and information that is obtained. Thus, a tenet of mixed methods research is that researchers should mindfully create designs that effectively answer their research questions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Hanson et al. (2005) also offer some recommendations for designing, implementing and reporting a mixed methods study. Thus, they recommend that researchers attend closely to design and implementation issues, particularly to how and when data are collected (e.g. concurrently or sequentially). The study's purpose plays an important role here. They also recommend that researchers familiarize themselves with the analysis and integration strategies used in the published mixed methods studies. Moreover, because mixed methods studies require a working knowledge and understanding of both quantitative and qualitative methods, and because they involve multiple stages of data collection and analysis that frequently extend over long periods of time, they recommend that researchers work in teams. Moreover, in preparing a mixed methods manuscript, they recommend that researchers use the phrase 'mixed methods' in the titles of their studies, and that, early on, researchers foreshadow the logic and progression of their studies by stating the study's purpose and research questions in the Introduction. Clear, well-written purpose statements and research questions that specify the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study help focus the manuscript. Additionally, these authors recommend that, in the Introduction, researchers explicitly state a rationale for mixing quantitative and qualitative methods and data (e.g. to triangulate results, to develop or improve one method with the other, to extend the study's results). Another recommendation is that, in the Methods, researchers specify the

type of mixed methods research design used. By doing this, the field will be able to build a common vocabulary and shared understanding of the different types of designs available.

A mixed methods study must be competently designed and conducted, and, as a consequence, management scholars must have the skills and training to carry out both quantitative and qualitative methods and take advantage of this type of research (Creswell et al., 2003). Coupled with traditional statistics coursework, in-depth training concerning the discovery process (e.g. qualitative observational techniques or case studies) has the advantage of enabling researchers to think fully about what types of research questions are innovative, interesting and practically relevant (Currall et al., 1999). But the key point here is that along with quantitative and qualitative courses, it may be necessary to design a specific mixed methods research course. Students should be taught about purposes, designs and the use of mixed methods research, and they should also be encouraged to carry out mixed methods research as part of their training. Academic institutions should take this important issue into account.

An important challenge in mixed methods studies is the quality of this type of research. Methodologists in the field of mixed methods debate the role of quality and validity in this approach (Bryman, 2006; Dellinger and Leech, 2007; Bryman et al., 2008; O'Cathain et al., 2008; Pluye et al., 2009). Their recommendations will be useful for researchers and journals.

In addition, there are challenges in publishing mixed methods studies that generally arise from existing constraints such as page limits. One of the biggest challenges related to publishing mixed methods research is describing the complexity of mixed methods studies within the page limits. While such limits pose a challenge to all researchers, they are particularly problematic for mixed methods research due to the quantity of information that must be conveyed for a study combining two different methods.

Moreover, there is a risk of diluting or diffusing one of the methods (the less important one or the one less accepted by academia) by trying to do too much within the page limit. In summary, by limiting space, journals may discourage the publication of mixed methods research.

CONCLUSION

This chapter provides several ideas about the application of mixed methods designs in business and management. First, several aspects of mixed methods have been examined to make clear what the literature already tells us about this type of research. Second, I have carried out a description of several mixed methods articles published in three top management journals, describing the main characteristics of the mixed methods studies identified. Finally, implications and recommendations for an adequate application of mixed methods research have been provided based on previous experiences in other fields.

An important characteristic of mixed methods is integration (Fetters & Freshwater, 2015). Business and management researchers that use mixed methods must integrate the quantitative and qualitative parts and should consider this question: what synergy can be gained by the additional work of using both qualitative and quantitative methods? This aspect urges researchers to carefully plan their works with intentional choices that can leverage integration. The key point here is to produce a whole through integration that is greater than the sum of the individual qualitative and quantitative parts.

Finally, I would like to indicate that I agree with the 'paradigm of choices' emphasized by Patton (1990). A paradigm of choices rejects methodological orthodoxy in favour of methodological appropriateness as the primary criterion for judging methodological quality. Thus, this paradigm of choices recognizes that

different methods are appropriate for different situations and questions (Molina-Azorin, 2007). The predominance of more quantitative-based methodological tools in business and management does not mean that these tools are applicable to all research questions. The research question and context should dictate the choice of the appropriate research methods. In any case, we must also take into account the fact that knowledge about qualitative and mixed methods research can stimulate a researcher to better define and analyse innovative problems and research questions in business and management research.

REFERENCES

- Anand, N. & Watson, M. (2004). Tournament rituals in the evolution of fields: the case of the Grammy Awards. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47, 59–80.
- Andrew, S. & Halcomb, E. (Eds) (2009). *Mixed Methods Research for Nursing and the Health Sciences*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Armstrong, C. & Shimizu, K. (2007). A review of approaches to empirical research on the resource-based view of the firm. *Journal of Management*, 33, 959–86.
- Barr, P. (2004). Current and potential importance of qualitative methods in strategy research. In D. Ketchen & D. Bergh (Eds), *Research Methodology in Strategy and Management*, vol. 1 (pp. 165–88). Oxford: Elsevier.
- Biesta, G. (2010). Pragmatism and the philosophical foundations of mixed methods research. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds), *Sage Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research*, 2nd edn (pp. 95–118). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Boyd, B., Finkelstein, S. & Gove, S. (2005). How advanced is the strategy paradigm? The role of particularism and universalism in shaping research outcomes. *Strategic Management Journal*, 26, 841–54.
- Bryman, A. (1988). *Quantity and Quality in Social Science Research*. London: Routledge.
- Bryman, A. (2006). Paradigm peace and the implications for quality. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 9, 111–26.
- Bryman, A. (2007). Barriers to integrating quantitative and qualitative research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1, 8–22.
- Bryman, A., Becker, S. & Sempik, J. (2008). Quality criteria for quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research: a view from social policy. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11, 261–76.
- Bryman, A. & Bell, E. (2015). *Business Research Methods*, 4th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cassell, C. & Symon, G. (2006). Editorial. Taking qualitative methods in organization and management research seriously. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 1, 4–12.
- Challiol, H. & Mignonac, K. (2005). Relocation decision-making and couple relationships: a quantitative and qualitative study of dual-earner couples. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26, 247–74.
- Creswell, J. (1999). Mixed-method research: introduction and application. In G. J. Cizek (ed.), *Handbook of Educational Policy* (pp. 455–47). San Diego: Academic Press.
- Creswell, J. (2003). *Research Design. Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. (2015). *A Concise Introduction to Mixed Methods Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J., Plano Clark, V., Gutmann, M. & Hanson, W. (2003). Advanced mixed methods research designs. In A. Tashakkori and C. Teddlie (Eds), *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research* (pp. 209–40). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J., Tashakkori, A., Jensen, K. & Shapley, K. (2003). Teaching mixed methods research: practices, dilemmas, and challenges. In A. Tashakkori and C. Teddlie (Eds), *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research* (pp. 619–37). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Creswell, J. & Creswell, J. (2005). Mixed methods research: developments, debates, and dilemmas. In R. Swanson and E. Holton III

- (Eds), *Research in Organizations. Foundations and Methods of Inquiry* (pp. 315–26). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Creswell, J.W. & Plano Clark, V.L. (2007). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J.W. & Plano Clark, V.L. (2011). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Curral, S., Hammer, T., Baggett, L. & Doniger, G. (1999). Combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies to study group processes: an illustrative study of a corporate board of directors. *Organizational Research Methods*, 2, 5–36.
- Curral, S. & Towler, A. (2003). Research methods in management and organizational research: Toward integration of qualitative and quantitative techniques. In A. Tashakkori and C. Teddlie (Eds), *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research* (pp. 513–26). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Curry, L. & Nunez-Smith, M. (2015). *Mixed Methods in Health Sciences Research. A Practical Primer*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Datta, L. (1994). Paradigm wars: a basis for peaceful coexistence and beyond. In C. Reichardt and S. Rallis (Eds), *The Qualitative-Quantitative Debate: New Perspectives* (pp. 53–70). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Dellinger, A. & Leech, N. (2007). Toward a unified validation framework in mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1, 309–32.
- Denscombe, M. (2008). Communities of practice. A research paradigm for the mixed methods approach. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 2, 270–83.
- Dyer, J. & Hatch, N. (2006). Relation-specific capabilities and barriers to knowledge transfers: creating advantage through network relationships. *Strategic Management Journal*, 27, 701–19.
- Edmondson, A. & McManus, S.E. (2007). Methodological fit in management field research. *Academy of Management Review*, 32, 1155–79.
- Fetters, M. & Freshwater, D. (2015). The 1+1=3 integration challenge. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 9, 115–17.
- Grant, A., Dutton, J. & Rosso, B. (2008). Giving commitment: employee support programs and the prosocial sensemaking process. *Academy of Management Journal*, 51, 898–918.
- Grant, A., Berg, J. & Cable, D. (2014). Job titles as identity badges: how self-reflective titles can reduce emotional exhaustion. *Academy of Management Journal*, 4, 1201–25.
- Greene, J., Caracelli, V. & Graham, W. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 11, 255–74.
- Greene, J. (2007). *Mixed Methods in Social Inquiry*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Greene, J. & Hall, J. (2010). Dialectics and pragmatism: being of consequence. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds), *Sage Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research*, 2nd edn (pp. 119–43). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hanson, W., Creswell, J.W., Plano Clark, V.L., Petska, K. & Creswell, J.D. (2005). Mixed methods research designs in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52, 224–35.
- Hitt, M.A., Gimeno, J. & Hoskisson, R. (1998). Current and future research methods in strategic management. *Organizational Research Methods*, 1, 6–44.
- Jick, T. (1979). Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods: triangulation in action. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24, 602–11.
- Johnson, B. (2017). Dialectical pluralism: a metaparadigm whose time has come. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 11, 156–73.
- Johnson, B. & Onwuegbuzie, A. (2004). Mixed methods research: a research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33, 14–26.
- Johnson, B., Onwuegbuzie, A. & Turner, L. (2007). Toward a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1, 112–33.
- Jones, D. & Martens, M. (2009). The mediating role of overall fairness and the moderating role of trust certainty in justice-criteria relationships: the formation and use of fairness heuristics in the workplace. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 30, 1025–51.

- Lavie, D., Lechner, C. & Singh, H. (2007). The performance implications of timing of entry and involvement in multipartner alliances. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50, 578–604.
- Lee, T. (1999). *Using Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lilius, J., Worline, M., Maitlis, S., Kanov, J., Dutton, J. & Frost, P. (2008). The contours and consequences of compassion at work. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 29, 193–218.
- Maxwell, J. & Mittapalli, K. (2010). Realism as a stance for mixed methods research. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds), *Sage Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research* (2nd edn, pp. 145–67). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mertens, D. (2005) *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology. Integrating Diversity with Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods*, 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Merterns, D. (2007). Transformative paradigm: mixed methods and social justice. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1, 212–25.
- Mertens, D. (2010). Transformative mixed methods research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16, 469–74.
- Molina-Azorin, J.F. (2007). Mixed methods in strategy research: applications and implications in the resource-based view. In D. Ketchen and D. Bergh (Eds), *Research Methodology in Strategy and Management*, Vol. 4 (pp. 37–73). Oxford: Elsevier.
- Molina-Azorin, J.F. (2011). The use and added value of mixed methods in management research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 5, 7–24.
- Molina-Azorin, J.F. (2012). Mixed methods research in strategic management: impact and applications. *Organizational Research Methods*, 15, 33–56.
- Molina-Azorin, J.F., Lopez-Gamero, M.D., Pereira-Moliner, J. & Pertusa-Ortega, E. (2012). Mixed methods studies in entrepreneurship research: applications and contributions. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 24, 425–56.
- Molina-Azorin, J.F. & Cameron, R. (2015). History and emergent practices of mixed and multiple methods in business research. In S. Hesse-Biber & R.B. Johnson (Eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Multimethod and Mixed Methods Research Inquiry* (pp. 466–85). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Molina-Azorin, J.F. & López-Gamero, M.D. (2016). Mixed methods studies in environmental management research: prevalence, purposes and designs. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 25, 134–148.
- Morgan, D. (1998). Practical strategies for combining qualitative and quantitative methods: applications to health research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 8, 362–76.
- Morgan, D. (2007). Paradigms lost and pragmatism regained: methodological implications of combining qualitative and quantitative methods. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1, 48–76.
- Morse, J. (1991). Approaches to qualitative-quantitative methodological triangulation. *Nursing Research*, 40, 120–23.
- Morse, J. & Niehaus, L. (2009). *Mixed Method Design. Principles and Procedures*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.
- Niglas, K. (2004). *The Combined Use of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Educational Research*. Tallinn: Tallinn Pedagogical University Press.
- O’Cathain, A., Murphy, E. & Nicholl, J. (2008). The quality of mixed methods studies in health services research. *Journal of Health Services and Research Policy*, 13, 92–8.
- Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*, 2nd edn. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Phelan, S., Ferreira, M. & Salvador, R. (2002). The first twenty years of the Strategic Management Journal. *Strategic Management Journal*, 23, 1161–8.
- Plano Clark, V.L. (2005). *Cross-disciplinary Analysis of the Use of Mixed Methods in Physics Education Research, Counselling Psychology, and Primary Care*. Ph.D. Dissertation. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln.
- Plano Clark, V. & Ivankova, N. (2016). *Mixed Methods Research. A Guide to the Field*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pluye, P., Gagnon, M., Griffiths, F. & Johnson-Lafleur, J. (2009). A scoring system for appraising mixed methods research, and concomitantly appraising qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods primary studies in

- mixed studies reviews. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 46, 529–46.
- Reichardt, C. & Cook, T. (1979). Beyond qualitative versus quantitative methods. In T. Cook and C. Reichardt (Eds), *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Evaluation Research* (pp. 7–32). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Rouse, M. & Daellenbach, U. (1999). Rethinking research methods for the resource-based perspective: isolating sources of sustainable competitive advantage. *Strategic Management Journal*, 20, 487–94.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. (2016). *Research Methods for Business Students*, 7th edn. Essex: Pearson.
- Shannon-Baker, P. (2016). Making paradigms meaningful in mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 10, 319–34.
- Sharma, S. & Vredenburg, H. (1998). Proactive corporate environmental strategy and the development of competitively valuable organizational capabilities. *Strategic Management Journal*, 19, 729–53.
- Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C. (1998). *Mixed Methodology. Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C. (Eds) (2003). *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C. (Eds.) (2010). *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research*, 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Teddlie, C. & Tashakkori, A. (2006). A general typology of research designs featuring mixed methods. *Research in the Schools*, 13, 12–28.
- Teddlie, C. & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *Foundations of Mixed Methods Research. Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yeoh, P. & Roth, K. (1999). An empirical analysis of sustained advantage in the U.S. pharmaceutical industry: impact of firm resources and capabilities. *Strategic Management Journal*, 20, 637–53.
- Zellmer-Bruhn, M. & Gibson, C. (2006). Multinational organization context: implications for team learning and performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49, 501–18.

Resisting Colonization in Business and Management Studies: From Postcolonialism to Decolonization

Alia Weston and J. Miguel Imas

INTRODUCTION

Official history has it that Vasco Núñez de Balboa was the first man to see, from a summit in Panama, two oceans at once. Were the natives blind?

Who first gave names to corn and potatoes and tomatoes and chocolate and the mountains and rivers of America? Hernán Cortés? Francisco Pizarro? Were the natives mute?

The Pilgrims on the Mayflower heard Him: God said America was the Promised Land. Were the natives deaf?

Later on, the grandchildren of the Pilgrims seized the name and everything else. Now they are the Americans. And those of us who live in the other Americas, who are we? (Galeano, 2008, p. 122)

The opening quote alerts us to the key, historical concerns of colonialism and imperialism. It does so by illustrating the ways in which Europeans physically and ideologically conquered and exploited the land of Indigenous populations, in this case the

'Americas', in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was not only the Americas, but also Africa and the entire global south that suffered the ignominious effects of colonial, imperialist rule. These historical impacts of colonization continue to influence contemporary society, and have led to tremendous consequences for the way in which we conceptualize the *other* in research. This is most evident in the way we frame *marginalized subjects* from a Western point of view. In business and management studies, colonial epistemology has prevailed for decades and still continues to influence how we describe and engage with the *other* (Mohanty, 1988), imposing a sense of superior knowledge in the development of methodologies with which to 'study' *them*. In this chapter, we challenge this colonial tradition by exploring a range of perspectives that resist these injustices and offer alternative ways of constructing knowledge with the marginalized *other*, and bring forward a more encompassing and grounded understanding of people who have

suffered from colonial rule. This is our contribution to this volume, because we believe it is essential for any scholar to be alert to the vicissitudes of conducting research in the global south and the fourth world (Restrepo & Escobar, 2005).

Before we begin, we wish to clarify our position on ‘postcolonialism’ and acknowledge the inherent challenges of using this term. For the purposes of this chapter, we use the term postcolonial to encompass an evolving tradition of ideas and practices that work to resist colonization. We do so with full recognition that postcolonial is not an umbrella term, but an idea that sits alongside a range of congruent traditions including: anticolonial thinking (e.g. Grosfoguel, 2011), subaltern studies (e.g. Chakrabarty, 2005), Indigenous perspectives (e.g. Stewart-Harawira, 2013) and decolonial practices (e.g. Mignolo, 2009). All these traditions are similar in that they have cumulatively sought to advance an ongoing resistance to colonization; however, each is distinct with its own inherent opportunities and limitations. It is, therefore, through an ongoing critical dialogue that these traditions continue to evolve. Despite the inherent limitations (which we will highlight in this chapter), we have chosen to employ the term postcolonialism because it is a seminal perspective which, we believe, is still enduring and relevant today.

We position this chapter as an invitation to whoever is interested in gaining a broad understanding of postcolonialism and associated ideas, how these ideas have developed across business and management, and what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate research methods in this area of study. The chapter is structured as follows. We start by explaining the historical origins of postcolonial theory and highlighting associated perspectives. We then note how the concept has evolved in business and management studies. Following this, we focus on the main objective of this chapter, and conduct a critical review of business and management research methods. We employ an analytical

framework derived from postcolonial theory to highlight both appropriate and inappropriate use of methods in research that resist (neo-)colonialism. We highlight the ongoing debate and give examples of empirical research to illustrate how methods have been applied in the field. By empirical, we mean research that engages with the world and goes beyond purely theoretical analysis. After our analysis, we explore pertinent issues in the field. In particular, we comment on key silences and omissions, as well as practical issues of undertaking research in local contexts. We end by pointing to the future of research in this area, acknowledging the inherent challenges and highlighting the opportunities for researchers moving forward.

RESISTING COLONIALISM

There is no unified theory of postcolonialism, but it is predominantly taken to be a set of ideas that are critical of the historical and contemporary inequities in power that are created as a result of colonialism and imperialism (e.g. Loomba, 1998). These ideas are conceived as a way of reclaiming power following colonial expansion (e.g. Banerjee & Prasad, 2008; Prasad, 2003a; Said, 1978; Young, 2008). Although the anti-imperialist movement began much earlier, postcolonialism as a field of study originated in the late 1970s through literary and cultural studies, following Edward Said’s work on Orientalism. Through his work, Said emphasized the exaggerated distinctions made between Eastern and Western cultures and the ways in which colonially positioned Western (i.e. European) perspectives were categorized as superior to non-Western perspectives. Key concepts related to postcolonialism include ‘neo-colonialism’, ‘hybridity’, ‘liminality’ and ‘mimicry’. Neo-colonialism recognizes that colonization has not ended, and explains the ongoing forms of

colonization present in contemporary society (Spivak, 1999; Young, 2003), while hybridity, liminality and mimicry articulate the subversive amalgamation of colonial and local ideologies which produce a space of resistance in colonized contexts (Bhabha, 1994, 1996; Özkazanç-Pan, 2008; Sambajee, 2015).

Despite its valuable contribution to challenging the power inequities inherent in (neo-)colonization, postcolonialism as a field is not without criticism. We wish to highlight three key issues. First, it is seen to be too obscure and theoretical, and thus lacking in practical, applied relevance to contemporary society (Abrahamsen, 2003). The second issue is the ongoing debate about the meaning of the term 'post' in postcolonial, and whether it is conceivable to talk about moving beyond the colonial period (Mbembe, 2001). Following this line of debate, it has been argued that the term is limited since it only applies to contexts in which Indigenous persons have gained independence from colonial rule, for example only in African, Asian and Latin American countries (Perera and Pugliese, 1998). But even in these latter contexts, critique is still prevalent. This is illustrated by Latin American scholars being critical of postcolonial theorizing for constituting a Eurocentric critique of Eurocentrism (Maldonado-Torres, 2011). Finally, a central drawback of postcolonial scholarship in the business and management field is the over-emphasis on theoretical critique (primarily focused on the work of Said, Bhabha and Spivak), with scant focus on methods. As such, there is a lack of insight about how to conduct first-hand research in this field.

In recognizing the wider limitations of postcolonial theory, we take the opportunity to acknowledge the congruent areas of study that are situated alongside postcolonialism. Here, we briefly comment on anticolonialism, subaltern studies and decolonial practices. By including the term anticolonialism, we acknowledge the history and revolutionary work of activists who resisted

colonialism. An example is Frantz Fanon's seminal work from the 1960s, which situates an anticolonial struggle for liberation (1967/2008; 1963). This history has developed from the work of black and African American writers who wrote against different forms of oppression, and championed the civil rights and women's rights movements (Smith, 1999/2005). Subaltern studies originated through work in South Asia, and typically refers to the engagements of 'subaltern' groups of people, or marginal populations, who fall outside of colonial domination. Work in this area is aligned with postcolonial studies because it critiques colonial domination by exploring spaces of poverty and forms of popular agency (Chakrabarty, 2005; Roy, 2011; Spivak, 1998/2006, 1999, 2005). Like anticolonial thinking and subaltern studies, decolonial practices also encompass forms of active resistance to colonialism.

Although it is not yet a term common to the business and management literature, it is also essential to highlight the work that has taken place in the field of decolonization studies (e.g. Lugones, 2010; Smith, 2012; Zavala, 2013). In doing so we recognize this as an area of study that has deep synergy with postcolonial studies, particularly because it has emerged through the critique of postcolonial theory. Here, we wish to acknowledge the valuable work taking place which we believe is useful for advancing colonial resistance in business and management studies. There is no single decolonial perspective, but it can be defined as a process of actively dismantling the colonialist power dimensions that still exist in contemporary (twenty-first-century) society (Ashcroft et al., 2013). It resists neo-colonization by incorporating activist and performative methodologies and resisting colonization in all aspects of life (Denzin et al., 2008). Research responds to a number of issues. For example, it disrupts contemporary issues of racism and patriarchy, through critical feminism (Cannella & Manuelito, 2008) and critical race theory (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008; Ladson-Billing & Donnor,

2008). In addition, it resists oppressive forms of pedagogy, by actively replacing these with critical pedagogy that emphasizes emancipation (Giroux & Giroux, 2008), and by highlighting local Indigenous pedagogies (McLaren & Jaramillo, 2008).

Decolonization also responds to the critique that postcolonialism only applies to post-independence contexts. For example, it accounts for the struggles of Indigenous communities by highlighting ongoing ‘settler–colonizer’ power dynamics in Australia, Canada and the USA (Perera & Pugliese, 1998; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Another stream of decolonial thought, which has emerged from Latin America, is critical of postcolonial research about the *other* that privileges the Eurocentric ideal of ‘emancipation’. The focus has shifted to the decolonial ‘liberation’ of the *other* – following for instance Enrique Dussel (Maldonado-Torres, 2011). Although the concept of decolonization addresses certain limitations inherent in postcolonial theory, it is not without criticism. For example, Tuck & Yang (2012) warn of the easy adoption of the discourse of decolonization wherein it is used as a method or metaphor to generally improve things in society. For instance, terms such ‘decolonize student thinking’ have been used. They argue that using this kind of terminology debases the essence of decolonization, since it is a misuse of the term. Despite this critique, the value of engaging with the concept of decolonization to account for neo-colonial dynamics is well recognized.

Stepping aside from critical debates of terminology, our position is that all these concepts are important to acknowledge because they question the ways in which colonially derived (Western/imperial) perspectives are categorized as superior; and Indigenous, local (non-Western) dimensions are excluded on the grounds of inferiority (Calás & Smircich, 1999; Frenkel and Shenhav, 2006; Prasad, 2003a; Said, 1978; Westwood, 2001). Whether working through a postcolonial, decolonizing, or other associated lens, researchers actively subvert colonially inspired research approaches,

and instead reflexively theorize and incorporate methods which resist colonization and prioritize peoples’ lived experiences. The aim is to first unearth explicit and hidden power dimensions in research (see e.g. Imas, 2005). The next step is to critically question how research is conducted from philosophical, theoretical and empirical standpoints. Researchers then overcome power imbalances by undertaking research which is culturally appropriate in the context of study. They do so by re-emphasizing local, cultural and Indigenous forms of engagement (Tsui, 2004), engaging with performative methodologies to redistribute power (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008) and giving voice to the silenced (Muecke, 1992).

Before we progress further, it is essential to highlight our reflexive personal critique as authors of this chapter (see, for example, Giraldo, 2016). Alia is mixed heritage and navigates the liminal space of hybrid cultures. She is South African (Cape-Malay) and British, was born and raised in Zimbabwe and currently resides in Canada. Miguel is of European heritage, was born and raised in Chile and currently resides in the UK. We both actively engage in field research about business and management in the postcolonial contexts of Africa and Latin America (respectively). In these contexts, we work critically with postcolonial theory and research methods. We reflexively recognize the unearned privileges that our backgrounds and positions afford, as well as the inherent limitations of our work. The limitations include the problematics of writing in the English language as well as working remotely in contexts which embody the ongoing histories of (neo-)colonization.

POSTCOLONIAL RESEARCH IN BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES

In the business and management field, postcolonial research has a more recent history, and

is still gaining recognition, when compared to related areas such as colonial resistance or postcolonial literary and cultural studies (e.g. Ibarra-Colado, 2006). Research in the field primarily employs the term ‘postcolonial’, and it first appeared in English publications in the mid-1990s. In business and management studies, postcolonial thinking is percussed by two streams of critique which both sought to advance new critical knowledge and emancipation in the field. These were the critique of parochialism and ethnocentrism; as well as critique from post-structuralist and postmodern frameworks, which were positioned in the Critical Management Studies (CMS) movement (Jack et al., 2011). The reason for the slow development of the field – emerging nearly 20 years after Said’s work – is due to the fact that managerial practices and organizational forms are argued to be based on (neo-)colonial ideologies (see, for example, Bush and Maltby, 2004; Cooke, 2003; Frenkel and Shenhav, 2003; Neu, 2000; Spivak, 1998/2006; Tyson et al., 2004; Westwood, 2006). As a result, postcolonial and related perspectives occupied a marginal position in the extended business and management field (Prasad, 2012), and there are limited frameworks available to account for the (neo-)colonial impact of management theories and practices on Indigenous communities (Banerjee, 2000).

Postcolonial critique of business and management research alerts us to the problem that theories which are developed through (neo-)colonial frameworks create value for only certain types of people and institutions and marginalize other peoples and institutions, particularly those that are Indigenous (Banerjee, 2000). From this perspective, researchers work to question the appropriateness of business and management practices, and incorporate more appropriate and reflexive approaches to research (Prasad, 2003a). Research has focused on radically reconfiguring philosophical, methodological and ethical dimensions in business and management studies (Westwood, 2006).

Despite the slow development, postcolonial research has continued to gain prominence in business and management studies. There are now prominent English-language journals which welcome this critical approach to business and management research. For example, the journal *Critical Perspectives on International Business* has provided a space for critique for over 10 years (Alcadipani & Faria, 2014). It is committed to providing voice to marginalized groups (i.e. peripheral regions) and excluded perspectives (i.e. Indigenous communities), as well as to embracing postcolonial critique (Cairns & Roberts, 2011). Commitment to the latter is demonstrated by this being the first journal to publish a special issue focused on critical postcolonial reflections of management and organization (see Banerjee and Prasad, 2008). The journal *Organization* has demonstrated a parallel commitment to critical research in organization studies, by similarly publishing a special issue dedicated to postcolonial studies in 2011 (see Jack et al., 2011). These are not the only journals to publish work on postcolonial issues in the business and management field. Other prominent English-language journals include *Organization Studies*, *Human Relations* and *Management Learning*. The advancement of the field is commendable, but we also recognize the inherent limitations of the field being advanced, and dominated, by a colonial language (i.e. English).

Given the complexity of this field of study, in that it encompasses a range of traditions and accompanying limitations, we reflected extensively on the ‘best’ way to provide an overview of research methods which are appropriate for undertaking research in postcolonial contexts and that work to resist (neo-)colonialism. We admit that this was not a simple undertaking, especially in a limited number of pages. Our approach, which you will see in the following sections, has been to conduct a critical review of empirical research in business and management studies, through a postcolonial lens.

A POSTCOLONIAL CRITIQUE OF RESEARCH METHODS IN BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES

In this section, we conduct our postcolonial analysis of research methods in business and management studies. Our objective in this review is to highlight examples of a range of research methods in the field, in order to evaluate the appropriateness, as well as inappropriateness, of methods employed in (post) colonial contexts. To do so, we have used a framework based on postcolonial critique (Weston, 2012) which integrates key tenets derived from early postcolonial theory and practice. The framework incorporates two main dimensions and is visualized in Figure 8.1. The first dimension (on the vertical axis) acknowledges that postcolonial thinking critiques the positioning of colonially derived concepts above local concepts (Prasad, 2003a;

Said, 1978). The second dimension (on the horizontal axis) acknowledges postcolonial scholarship that works to reflexively re-emphasize Indigenous or local forms of engagement (Muecke, 1992; Tsui, 2004). When the two dimensions are superimposed, this results in four categories that we have used to position research methods that resist (neo-) colonialism, in contrast to methods that reproduce colonial power imbalances.

Using the framework, we review business and management research methods through the four categories. We have labelled these: A: Indigenous methods; B: Hybrid-Liminal methods; C: Appropriation or neglect of methods; D: (Neo-)colonial methods. In our view, the former two categories A and B (on the left) depict research that resists (neo-)colonialism, since research in these categories reflexively re-emphasizes Indigenous or local forms of engagement. However, the categories C and

Perspective of method	Indigenous/Local	A: Indigenous Methods are incorporated within a frame of postcolonial critique. Researchers reflexively work <i>with</i> Indigenous or local forms of engagement.	C: Appropriation or Neglect Non-reflexive appropriation of Indigenous forms of engagement by researchers for research purposes, or unreflexive neglect of appropriate methods. Imbalanced power dimensions are ignored.
	Colonially Derived	B: Hybrid-Liminal Methods are incorporated within a postcolonial frame. Researchers reflexively construct a hybrid-liminal space wherein historically colonial methods are subverted and usefully combined with local forms of engagement.	D: (Neo)colonial Methods are either derived from historically colonial relationships, or methods form new relationships of colonization. Imbalanced power dimensions are ignored.
		Reflexive	Non-Reflexive
		Emphasis of local engagement in research methods	

Figure 8.1 Typology of approaches categorizing postcolonial vs colonial research

D (on the right) account for research methods which are not appropriate because they continue to integrate colonially derived concepts in a non-reflexive manner. In the remainder of this section, we explore each category. We discuss these in reverse order of importance (i.e. D to A) in order that we may first critique and dismiss the areas that are not appropriate, and then end by highlighting research methods and approaches that are relevant to the ongoing resistance of (neo-)colonialism. In our review, we highlight critical debate on the use of these methods, or give examples of empirical research to illustrate.

D: (Neo-)colonial Methods

In this category, we emphasize (neo-)colonial research methods in the business and management field. The category includes methods which are either derived from historically colonial relationships, or methods which form new relationships of colonization (e.g. Spivak, 1999; Young, 2003). In all cases, the literature that falls in to this category ignores the imbalanced power dimensions that result from colonization. Rather than reviewing specific examples of the literature, here we highlight the critical commentary and ongoing debate that has arisen surrounding this focus on research methods.

In the business and management field, postcolonial scholars have critiqued traditional international business (IB) and cross-cultural management (CCM) research for having restricted views of what constitutes knowledge about business, management and organization. In particular, IB and CCM are criticized for being (neo-)colonial because they employ Western-derived or Eurocentric constructs and assume that these constitute behaviour in any cultural context (Alcadipani & Faria, 2014; Mourdoukoutas, 1999; Prasad, 2003b; Westwood, 2006; Westwood & Jack, 2007). For instance, this critique applies to the way that multinational corporations privilege the culture of the home country above

the culture of any other country the corporation does business in (Fougère & Moulettes, 2012). The issue is that approaches such as these perpetuate colonial practices in the workplace because they fail to acknowledge that many different worlds and knowledges coexist simultaneously (Alcadipani & Faria, 2014; Mourdoukoutas, 1999). This has resulted in the local knowledge from subaltern groups being marginalized or homogenized (Escobar, 2007; Westwood, 2006).

Following this critique, when research is conducted in IB and CCM contexts, methods are considered to be highly problematic from a postcolonial lens. Examples of problematic methods include the over-reliance on positivist quantitative methods as well as naïve interpretivist qualitative methods. For example, quantitative methods objectify knowledge and exclude views which highlight multiplicities of diverse knowledge (Muecke, 1992). Chen (2004), for example, points to the disregard for diversity in Asia management approaches and the over-reliance on questionnaire data in CCM research, which homogenizes local knowledge. Coronado (2012) raises a similar critique of CCM and points to the disregard for cultural diversity, specifically highlighting the (neo-)colonial perpetuation of stereotypes in Latin America. As well as this, naïve interpretivism presupposes that qualitative methods and insights can be applied and generalized across all contexts (Jack & Westwood, 2006; Westwood, 2006). For instance, European ethnography, a colonially derived research method, has historically excluded Indigenous peoples from negotiating or disrupting knowledge that was produced about them (Said, 1986). European ethnography is still used in contemporary research contexts and the same critiques apply.

C: Appropriation or Neglect of Methods

In this category, we highlight two streams of literature. The first includes the non-reflexive appropriation of Indigenous forms of

engagement by researchers for research purposes. In these forms of engagement, imbalanced power dimensions are either disregarded or ignored altogether. The second stream of literature attempts to include postcolonial theoretical critique, but unreflexively fails to apply the same level of critique when incorporating research methods.

Appropriation is used to describe the ways that knowledge is adapted or taken without benefit for the original 'owner'. For example, the way that Western anthropologists have historically 'stolen' Indigenous knowledge (Banerjee & Linstead, 2001). Banerjee and Linstead (2004) critique Whiteman & Cooper's (2000) work in which they apply Western models of management to explain the organizational engagement of an Indigenous beaver trapper of the Cree Nation in Canada. The authors argue that although this is an original piece of ethnographic work, the theorizing perpetuates (neo-)colonial thought. They point out that the article unreflexively ignores histories of colonization in Canada, appropriates knowledge of an Indigenous community without permission, and shows a lack of awareness of the problematic nature of ethnography. Although they draw attention to this study as an example, they highlight issues which apply to anthropological studies more widely. Another example of appropriation is highlighted by Xu's (2008) critique of comparative management literature. Xu performs a critical reading of Redding's (1990) work on Chinese business and management practices, arguing that it privileges Western intellectual and cultural ideas over local ideas. Redding's work is argued to be appropriative because it propagates a naïve Eurocentric view of Chinese business practice, since the voice and capacity for dialogue of the Chinese subject is denied. As these examples demonstrate, an issue with appropriative research is that the findings perpetuate unexamined assumptions and do not correctly account for the worldview of peoples in the research context. In this way, Indigenous or local knowledges are either adapted for the benefit of others, or they are

viewed as less important and marginalized in comparison to Western ideologies. There is, however, still debate over what are considered as the boundaries of appropriation. For example, Mangaliso's (2001) view is that in South Africa, it is encouraging to see non-Indigenous persons learning Indigenous languages so that they can better understand (organizational) engagement in other cultures.

The second stream of literature in this category has been identified as problematic because it attempts to include pertinent postcolonial theoretical critique, but unreflexively fails to apply the same level of critique when incorporating research methods. Adanhounme (2011), for example, performs an excellent postcolonial analysis of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in Ghana by arguing that CSR reproduces (neo-)colonial dimensions when it incorporates organizational dimensions that meet foreign expectations, and excludes local communities. The analysis is excellent, but the methods lack the same level of consideration from a postcolonial lens. The research employs a qualitative case study design to understand the CSR dimensions in a mining plant, and the resultant interview data (including interviews, field observations and consultation of documentation) was analysed via emergent themes related to the theoretical perspectives in the study. There is an attempt to modify some of the interviews to incorporate a life storytelling approach with local mine workers and community members. However, the details are limited and there is a lack of explicit reflexive critique about the appropriateness of the chosen research methods for postcolonial research. Similarly, Chio's (2008) research in Malaysia focuses on issues related to epistemic coloniality which are inherent in globalization and knowledge transfer in developing countries. The author performs a valuable postcolonial critique of the modernist construction of knowledge in Malaysia, in particular questioning the power dynamics of quality management. Following the theoretical analysis, it is stated that the

insights are supported by primary and secondary data, of which the primary data were obtained from interviews. Again, this is an important examination of postcolonial analysis from a theoretical standpoint. However, the methodological approach is limited since it is skimmed over and is not explained in sufficient depth. Specifically, there is no mention made of how postcolonial theorizing has impacted on the choice of methods.

B: Hybrid-Liminal Methods

In the following section, we draw attention to what we call hybrid-liminal research methods. The term hybridity denotes the way in which those who were colonized adopted and reshaped the cultures and philosophies of the colonizers. We note the criticisms of hybridity as a vehicle for the loss of traditional culture and identity (see Abrahamsen, 2003); however, we define hybridity following Bhabha (1994), who argues that those who were colonized were not passive victims of colonial domination but employed hybrid culture as a form of agency to resist domination. In this way, hybridity is the 'liminal' in-between space that collapses the divide between colonizers and colonized, enabling subversion and resistance. It signifies the creative transformation of Western culture and practices (Ashcroft, 2001). From this perspective, a hybrid-liminal space is reflexively constructed, and colonially derived methods are subverted and productively combined with local forms of engagement. This can be achieved in two ways, either by combining colonially derived and local methods in a reflexive manner in postcolonial research, *or* by drawing on historically Western concepts or methods and reflexively incorporating them into research in a context-sensitive manner which resonates with a postcolonial perspective.

The following are examples of hybrid-liminal research which reflexively combines colonially derived and local methods

in postcolonial contexts. For example, Imas et al. (2012) challenge the conception of who is an entrepreneur through their concept of barefoot entrepreneur[ing]. Their conceptualization builds on Max-Neef's (1992) critical notion of barefoot economics, which redistributes power and makes visible the organizationally invisible. The authors employed a 'microstoria' methodology (Ginsburg, 1993; González y González, 1997; Molho, 2004) to subvert the hegemonic power of grand theories and narratives (i.e. economic theory) in mainstream research and emphasize the lived experience of those who are not heard (see Boje, 2001). Narrative interpretations were published to highlight the experiences of barefoot entrepreneurs who dwell at the margins of organizational society. Similarly, Imas & Weston (2012) employed an 'improvised ethnography' in the streets of two postcolonial countries, Brazil and Zimbabwe, to subvert the Eurocentric management/organization discourse that labels marginalized urban outcasts as organization-less. Their methodological approach reflexively drew on Knoblauch's (2005) focused ethnography, which was critically re-imagined via a postcolonial lens to enable spontaneous conversations to arise *with* those who are organizationally marginalized. Narrative interpretations were shared in the published work to counteract the dominant Eurocentric discourse and emphasize a co-constructed discourse of the south, which is re-written to reflect the organizational solidarity, resilience and resistance of the speakers. Similarly, Sambajee (2015) employed a focused ethnography to understand non-traditional forms of diasporic resistance in the Mauritian hotel industry. The methodology reflexively supported a postcolonial analysis which was directed through Bhabha's theories on mimicry, ambivalence and hybridity.

A further example is Chandrasekara's (2009) research, in which she incorporates Spivak's (1988/2006) postcolonial critique in her feminist analysis of accounting and finance practices in a Sinhalese community.

She draws on critical feminist ethnography using participant observation and interviews, in a synergistic manner, to support the cultural critique in the local context. In this way, she reflexively incorporates a contextually sensitive methodology to give voice to local business practices which have been marginalized in comparison to mainstream European practices. Finally, Weston (2012) explores creative work practices in the post-colonial context of Zimbabwe by reflexively adopting a 'critical interpretivist' perspective (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Frenkel, 2008; Jack & Westwood, 2006) that drew on interpretivist and critical postcolonial philosophies. The research employed a 'critical narrative-ethnography' which incorporated Western and local Zimbabwean research methods. In particular, the research incorporated Zimbabwean narrative tradition (see Vambe, 2001, 2004) in order to subversively highlight local voice and the experience of creative work practices.

The following are examples of the second approach to constructing hybrid-liminal methods. As already highlighted, the literature here includes historically Western methods which are reflexively incorporated in a context-sensitive manner that resonates with a postcolonial perspective. Cairns (2007), for example, provokes discussion about the issues of applying hegemonic 'developed' worldviews to explain morality. He highlights the example of the ship-breaking industry in Cittagong, Bangladesh, and presents multi-storied readings with a range of secondary data (i.e. visual images and texts) to highlight the multiple interpretations and realities. This article is not positioned as a piece of post-colonial scholarship, but the author clearly accounts for the historical dimensions of colonization that have impacted on the country, and reflexively acknowledges the differences and implications of multiple interpretations. Tedmanson (2008) similarly performs an analysis of (post)colonial politics, supported by secondary data. In particular, she highlights the death of the Palm Island man,

Mulrunji, by drawing on a variety of publicly recorded textual documents (i.e. media commentaries, historical accounts, government inquiry records and legislation). She incorporates these to empirically support her theoretical analysis with narratives that are grounded in lived experiences.

A: Indigenous Methods

In this section, we explore the final category in Figure 8.1. This category highlights research which reflexively works *with* Indigenous or local forms of engagement. Indigenous is a term used to describe peoples who are born in a specific place or region (Ashcroft et al., 2013). It includes multidimensional forms of lived knowledge and reason that inform peoples' lives in the locality (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008). In particular, Indigenous peoples have their own situated philosophical and knowledge base that is tied to the particular locality, and grounded in the history, politics and culture of the locality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). This is distinct from the 'local' knowledge of people who have lived in, and gained social experience from, a place over time (Dei, 2012). For example, *Ubuntu* is a (South) African Indigenous term philosophically based on collective solidarity and communal care, whereby a person is a person only through other people (Mbigi, 1997). Meanwhile, the *Sumak Kawsay* movement, which originates from Andean Indigenous communities in Latin America, is based on an ancestral philosophy that relates to the notion of harmonic good life *bien vivir* (Misoczky, 2011).

From a postcolonial perspective, Indigenous knowledge has historically been viewed as inferior or primitive in comparison to European or Western knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Prominent examples of problematic research are the use of quantitative survey questionnaires and qualitative European ethnography. These colonially derived research methods have historically

not accounted for Indigenous knowledge and excluded Indigenous peoples from shaping the knowledge produced about them. As a result, localized knowledge has been marginalized, silenced and stereotyped, and does not reflect the worldviews of the people in the locality (Escobar, 2007; Westwood, 2006). In response to this, Indigenous issues have actively gained momentum through the work of decolonization. For instance, Smith's (1999/2005) work on Indigenous Māori research is considered as seminal work in the area of critical, resistive indigeneity. In comparison, critical Indigenous research has a shorter history in the business and management field, and it is only more recently that researchers have actively emphasized the importance of advancing Indigenous research in the field (Jack & Westwood, 2009; Jack et al., 2011; Jackson, 2013).

Indigenous scholars are working to critically address inequalities, and re-position Indigenous perspectives and methods in contextually appropriate ways that incorporate philosophies and knowledge bases that are tied to their localities. Resistive indigeneity advocates for the use of critical, participatory methodologies (Denzin et al., 2008). This includes leading the research agenda and deciding which methods should be used without direction from non-Indigenous researchers (Porsanger, 2004), as well as developing codes of conduct based on cultural ethics for researchers working on Indigenous issues (Smith, 1999/2005). In an early example, Henry & Pene (2001) highlight *Kaupapa* Māori research and methodology, as a set of methods and procedures, which are actively shaped by situated Māori views of what is 'true' and 'real'. This approach does not exclude the use of mainstream *Paheka* (Anglo) research categories, but instead decisions are made depending on the type of research and whether it aligns with Māori cultural values. These perspectives are mirrored by authors who emphasize the value of *Kaupapa* Māori research as a transformational methodology which empowers Indigenous Māori research, whilst

at the same time pragmatically accounting for the complex intersection between Indigenous and Western research in organizational contexts (Ruwhiu & Cathro, 2014; Ruwhiu & Cone, 2010).

Although there has been limited work undertaken from business and management contexts, more recent work is being conducted which is advancing the field. For instance, Schneider and Kayseas make an important contribution on Indigenous qualitative research in Chapter 10 of this volume. In addition, in their edited compilation, Spiller & Wolfgramm (2015) have given space for a range of authors to highlight the application of a diverse range of Indigenous spiritualities in the workplace. The works in the collection highlight a range of perspectives, including: Indian Adivasis; Native American; Canadian First Nations; Māori; Aboriginal Australian; Chinese Taoist; Japanese Zen, Shinto Confucian and Bhuddist; Andean Sumak Kawsay; and South African Ubuntu spiritual traditions. Although not all the works directly explicate Indigenous research methodologies, they are important because they present situated spiritual and cultural traditions, through the authentic voices of the authors. This work is crucial in enabling the reader to gain an enriched and enlightened understanding of Indigenous spiritual traditions from across the globe. It is an important and timely addition to the literature.

CRITICAL ISSUES

In this section, we reflect further on critical issues in the field. In particular, we comment on key silences and omissions, as well as practical issues of undertaking research in local contexts. We do so to point to the opportunities and limitations of engaging in research in this area, and contribute to the ongoing debate about the practical challenges of undertaking empirical research.

Challenges, Silences and Omissions of Knowledge

Some key challenges have been highlighted following our review of methods. The main challenges for research in this area are linked to the broader discipline. The first challenge concerns the concept of business and management research being fundamentally (neo-)colonial in nature. We argue this for two reasons: first, because the field stems from the colonial legacy of the division of labour, and second because methods used in vast areas of research such as IB and CCM perpetuate (neo-)colonial patterns that continue to marginalize the multiplicities of knowledge in Indigenous communities and localized contexts.

The second challenge that the review highlights is that most of the business and management research that does specifically incorporate postcolonial perspectives is theoretical. As well as this, the theoretical analysis is narrow since it primarily refers to the term postcolonial, and predominantly builds on the work of only certain postcolonial theorists. There is a clear need to widen the research agenda. The large focus on theoretical output leads to the third challenge. It exposes the limited focus on methods and the lack of field research which has incorporated postcolonial research methods. It also explains why some research includes sophisticated postcolonial analysis but at the same time the incorporation of methods does not involve the same level of critical, reflexive analysis. The practicalities of undertaking postcolonial research may be challenging, but it is essential that when methods are employed they are used in a manner that is appropriate to the context.

Practicalities of Undertaking Research

Employing methods in research that resists (neo-)colonialism is not straightforward. If it

were, more scholars would be doing so. Rather than employing taken-for-granted methods, researchers critically recognize the multiplicity of worldviews. In response, they work to reflexively design and implement specific methods which are applicable to the particular kinds of research *and* contexts. Postcolonial theory and related concepts have been a valuable force in shifting the way that research is conducted because it necessitates a radically different type of sensibility. Researchers are required to be transparent about the ethical and political dimensions of research, and remain faithful to these throughout the process (Westwood, 2006). This leads us to comment on the practicalities of engaging in these kinds of research. We do so by commenting on reflexivity and ethics, as well as the emotional tensions that may be faced in the field.

In research that recognizes the multiplicity of worldviews, the concept of validity is not applicable for evaluating the quality of research (Finlay, 2006). Reflexivity is an alternative approach used to critically evaluate whether the research has been carried out in an appropriate way (Angen, 2000; Pyett, 2003) and involves the ongoing evaluation of the relationships and methods of knowledge production (Calás & Smircich, 1992). Critical reflexivity involves a deeper questioning of the researchers' involvement in the research (Cunliffe, 2002). It encompasses a range of issues, including the evaluation of ethics, as well as the position of the researcher(s). Perera & Pugliese (1998) maintain that in order to be transformative and demonstrate a commitment to local struggle, a discipline should be open to (re)examination. Reflexive critique is therefore essential for the research that is undertaken in postcolonial and related research contexts because it is vital that the power dimensions of theory and practice are continually examined and evaluated.

Jack and Westwood (2006) suggest an approach to reflexivity in postcolonial research that consists of five key forms of evaluation to enhance the quality of

the research. These are: (1) evaluating the researcher(s) location(s) from a plural perspective, including reflecting not only on geographical location but also historical, cultural and institutional location(s); (2) evaluating the location(s) of the research participants; (3) evaluating researcher(s) motivations for the study; (4) evaluating the inclusion of local forms of self-representation and inclusive research practices; and (5) evaluating the implications inherent in writing and disseminating the research. They specify that these issues should be addressed in an ongoing way throughout the research process, but especially before, during and after data collection.

The acceptance of multiple worldviews also means that a universal code of ethics cannot exist. It is therefore inappropriate to assume that Western-Eurocentric views of ethical engagement apply in all research contexts. Indigenous scholars have retaliated against the colonial views of ethical engagement. As already pointed out, Smith (1999/2005) explains how Indigenous Māori communities have developed codes of conduct based on cultural ethics for researchers who are working on Indigenous issues in New Zealand. Indigenous codes such as these are essential for safeguarding cultural practices. Continuing this line of debate, Fine et al. (2008) draw our attention to the issue of safeguarding certain types of knowledge of Indigenous communities – such as sacred knowledge – that should not be reported to those outside a community. Finally, Onyango-Ouma's (2006) view is that ethics are tied to the locality; issues cannot always be predetermined and are often based on situated morals in the context of study. These views have implications for the appropriateness of rigid ethical codes that are enforced by research institutions.

Our final comment about the practicalities of engaging in research that resists (neo-)colonization is that it is not easy and can be emotionally taxing and compromising (Imas & Weston, 2012). It is a continual and demanding battle to resist and research

against the flow of (neo-)colonial research practices. Undertaking research in the field will therefore take much longer, especially when methods are tailor-made to fit the context. Fieldwork may also involve traveling to remote locations, or locations which suffer from repression and stigmatization. In addition, the continual engagement with reflexivity can be emotionally challenging, as researchers may find it difficult to sustain continual engagement (Finlay, 2002).

CONCLUSION

In this final section we point to the future of research in this area. We acknowledge the inherent challenges and highlight the opportunities for researchers moving forward. As we have stated in this chapter, conducting postcolonial and related types of research is not a straightforward endeavour. This explains why this area of research is still marginal in the business and management field, and why most authors resort to discussing postcolonial, decolonising or Indigenous perspectives in theoretical terms. Theoretical focus is not wrong, but it certainly draws attention to the overemphasis on theoretical critique and the related challenges that are inherent in styles of research presentation. Business and management research is typically required to fit a prescribed academic style and encompass well-established sets of constructs. It is therefore difficult to go against the grain, and these expectations pose limitations for researchers who wish to express their resistance to (neo-)colonialism. In this way, researchers working on postcolonial and related issues are pushed to conform to patterns of 'writing' and delivering research. This is perhaps inevitable as most postcolonial researchers in the business and management field have conducted their PhDs in Anglo-American academic settings, and are therefore influenced by the prevalent academic trends. Since researchers learn to

express themselves within customs and norms appropriate to the Anglo-American setting, so their ideas become a reflection of the Eurocentre. We note here that this is also self-critique, since both of us writing here are extremely aware that our style of writing in English is linked to our privileged backgrounds and the contexts in which we exercise our trade.

The two of us have come to realize that although this is not an impediment for conducting our postcolonial research, we equally know that it has been a big and risky challenge to move away from accepted theoretical traditions to engage in research on different terms, and engage with communities that are essentially invisible in the field of business, management or organization. So, the question is, what can we do? Is it possible to establish a research agenda that invites dialogue, reciprocity, understanding, participation and immersion in localities which are traditionally at the margins of our society? The answer is not only yes, but, equally, we must. The message of this chapter is that there is a space created for developing original methodologies that reflect alternative epistemologies and ontologies. These offer opportunities for us to challenge well-rehearsed Western theories and attitudes that impose or prescribe organizational behaviours which do not represent 'subaltern' lives and experiences. Methodologically, we must recognize that by engaging from a distance, we learn nothing and remain inconsequential in our fight for supporting ideas and philosophies which remain unknown and marginal.

There is growing acceptance of multiple worldviews and methods, so we stress the importance of harnessing this acceptance to unleash new ways of thinking and doing. In this vein, we equally stress the importance of engaging in the field and developing knowledge which reflects the worldviews and cosmologies of localized and Indigenous communities. This is essential to fully debate what it means to engage in business and

management, and to truly reflect plurivocal practices beyond the confines of the margins. To do so requires an engagement with communities in a manner that reflects a sensibility of co-collaboration, co-participation, co-voice. Doing so is a step to redirecting power to invisible communities. We need alternative ways of cooperating to tackle the deeply rooted issues that affect our economies, environments and social lives. We end this chapter by leaving you with a thought in the spirit of decolonizing the postcolonial:

As Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela said: It always seems impossible until it's done.

REFERENCES

- Abrahamsen, Rita (2003) 'African studies and the postcolonial challenge', *African Affairs*, 102(407): 189–210.
- Adanhounme, Armel B. (2011) 'Corporate social responsibility in postcolonial Africa: Another civilizing mission?', *Journal of Change Management*, 11(1): 91–110.
- Alcadipani, Rafael & Faria, Alex (2014) 'Fighting Latin American marginality in "international" business', *Critical Perspectives on International Business*, 10(1/2): 107–17.
- Alvesson, Mats & Deetz, Stanley (2000) *Doing Critical Management Research*. London: Sage.
- Angen, Maureen J. (2000) 'Evaluating interpretive inquiry', *Qualitative Health Research*, 10(3): 378–95.
- Ashcroft, Bill (2001) *Post-colonial Transformation*. London: Routledge.
- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. & Tiffin, H. (2013) *Post-colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. 3rd edn. Oxon and New York: Routledge (1st edn, 2000).
- Banerjee, Subhabrata B. (2000) 'Whose land is it anyway? National Interest, indigenous stakeholders, and colonial discourses', *Organization & Environment*, 13(1): 3–38.
- Banerjee, Subhabrata B. & Linstead, Stephen (2001) 'Globalization, multiculturalism and other fictions: Colonialism for the new millennium?', *Organization*, 8(4): 683–722.

- Banerjee, Subhabrata B. & Linstead, Stephen (2004) 'Masking subversion: Neocolonial embeddedness in anthropological accounts of indigenous management', *Human Relations*, 57(2): 221–47.
- Banerjee, Subhabrata B. & Prasad, Ansuman (2008) 'Introduction to the special issue on "critical reflections on management and organizations: A post colonial perspective"', *Critical Perspectives on International Business*, 4(2/3): 90–8.
- Bhabha, Homi K. (1994) *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Bhabha, Homi K. (1996) 'Cultures in between', in S. Hall & P. du Gay (eds), *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage, pp. 53–60.
- Boje, David M. (2001) *Narrative Methods for Organizational and Communication Research*. London: Sage.
- Bush, Barbara & Maltby, Josephine (2004) 'Taxation in West Africa: Transforming the colonial subject into the "governable person"', *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 15(1): 5–34.
- Cairns, George (2007) 'Postcard from Chit-tagong: Wish you were here?', *Critical Perspectives on International Business*, 3(2): 266–79.
- Cairns, George & Roberts, Joanne (2011) 'Reflections on seven years of critical perspectives on international business: An extended editorial', *Critical Perspectives on International Business*, 7(4): 289–96.
- Calás, Marta B. & Smircich, Linda (1992) 'Using the "F" word: Feminist theories and the social consequences of organizational research', in A.J. Mills & P. Tancred (eds), *Gendering Organizational Analysis*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, pp. 222–34.
- Calás, Marta B. & Smircich, Linda (1999) 'Past postmodernism? Reflections and tentative directions', *Academy of Management Review*, 24(4): 649–17.
- Cannella, Gaile S. & Manuelito, Kathryn D. (2008) 'Feminisms in unthought locations: Indigenous worldviews, marginalized feminisms, and revisioning an anticolonial social science', in N.K. Denzin, Y.S. Lincoln and L.T. Smith (eds), *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 45–59.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh (2005) 'A small history of subaltern studies', in H. Schwarz and S. Ray (eds), *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 467–85.
- Chandrasekara, Ishani (2009) 'Ethnofinance: An ethnographic study of the daily accounting and finance practices of a Sinhalese women's community'. PhD Dissertation, University of Leicester, Leicester.
- Chen, Min (2004) *Asian Management Systems: Chinese, Japanese and Korean Styles of Business*. London: Thompson.
- Chio, Vanessa C.M. (2008) 'Transfers, training and inscriptions: The production of modern market citizens in Malaysia', *Critical Perspectives on International Business*, 4(2/3): 166–83.
- Cooke, Bill (2003) 'The denial of slavery in management studies', *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(8): 1895–918.
- Coronado, Gabriela (2012) Constructing the 'neocolonial' manager: Orientalizing Latin America in the textbooks', in A. Prasad (ed.), *Against the Grain: Advances in Postcolonial Organization Studies*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press, pp. 155–76.
- Cunliffe, Ann L. (2002) 'Social poetics as management inquiry: A dialogical approach', *Journal of Management Psychology*, 11(2): 128–46.
- Dei, George S. (2012) 'Indigenous anti-colonial knowledge as "heritage knowledge" for promoting Black/African education in diasporic contexts', *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1): 102–19.
- Denzin, Norman K. & Lincoln, Yvonna S. (2008) 'Introduction: Critical methodologies and indigenous inquiry', in N.K. Denzin, Y.S. Lincoln & L.T. Smith (eds), *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 1–20.
- Denzin, Norman K., Lincoln, Yvonna S. & Smith, Linda T. (eds) (2008) *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Escobar, Arturo (2007) 'Worlds and knowledge otherwise: The Latin American modernity/coloniality research program', *Cultural Studies*, 21(2/3): 179–210.
- Fanon, Frantz (1963) *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press.

- Fanon, Frantz (1967/2008) *Black Skin White Masks*. London: Pluto Books.
- Fine, Michelle, Tuck, Eve & Zeller-Berkman, Sarah (2008) 'Do you believe in Geneva?: Methods and ethics at the global-local nexus', in N.K. Denzin, Y.S. Lincoln & L.T. Smith (eds), *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 157–80.
- Finlay, Linda (2002) "'Outing" the researcher: The provenance, process, and practice of reflexivity', *Qualitative Health Research*, 12(4): 531–45.
- Finlay, Linda (2006) ' "Rigour", "ethical integrity", or "artistry"?: Reflexively reviewing criteria for evaluating qualitative research', *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 69(7): 319–26.
- Fougère, Martin & Moulettes, Agneta (2012) 'A postcolonial reading of Hofstede's culture's consequences', in A. Prasad (ed.), *Against the Grain: Advances in Postcolonial Organization Studies*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press, pp. 276–301.
- Frenkel, Michal (2008) 'The multinational corporation as a third space: Rethinking international management discourse on knowledge transfer through Homi Bhabha', *Academy of Management Review*, 33(4): 924–42.
- Frenkel, Michal & Shenhav, Yehouda (2003) 'From Americanization to colonization: The diffusion of productivity models revisited', *Organization Studies*, 24(9): 1537–61.
- Frenkel, Michal & Shenhav, Yehouda (2006) 'From binarism back to hybridity: A postcolonial reading of management and organization studies', *Organization Studies*, 27(6): 855–76.
- Galeano, Eduardo (2008) *Espejos: Una Historia Casi Universal*. Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores.
- Ginzburg, Carlo (1993) 'Microhistory: Two or three things that I know about it', *Critical Inquiry*, 20(1): 10–35.
- Giraldo, Isis (2016) 'Coloniality at work: Decolonial critique and the postfeminist regime', *Feminist Theory*, 17(2): 157–73.
- Giroux, Henry A. & Giroux, Susan S. (2008) 'Challenging neoliberalism's new world order: The promise of critical pedagogy', in N.K. Denzin, Y.S. Lincoln and L.T. Smith (eds), *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 181–90.
- González, Luis (1997) *Invitación a la Microhistoria*. México: Clio/El Colegio Nacional.
- Grosfoguel, R. (2011) 'Decolonizing post-colonial studies and paradigms of political-economy: Transmodernity, decolonial thinking, and global coloniality', *TRANS-MODERNITY: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*, 1(1): 1–37.
- Henry, Ella & Pene, Hone (2001) 'Kaupapa Maori: Locating indigenous ontology, epistemology and methodology in the academy', *Organization*, 8(2): 234–42.
- Ibarra-Colado, Eduardo (2006) 'Organization Studies and epistemic coloniality in Latin America: Thinking Otherness from the margins', *Organization*, 13(4): 463–88.
- Imas, J. Miguel (2005) 'Rational darkness: Voicing the unheard in the modern management discourse of Chile', *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, 27(1): 111–33.
- Imas, J. Miguel & Weston, Alia (2012) 'From Harare to Rio de Janeiro: Kukiya-Favela organization of the excluded', *Organization*, 19(2): 205–27.
- Imas, J. Miguel, Wilson, Nick & Weston, Alia (2012) 'Barefoot entrepreneurs', *Organization*, 19(5): 563–85.
- Jack, Gavin & Westwood, Robert (2006) 'Post-colonialism and the politics of qualitative research in international business', *Management International Review*, 46(4): 481–501.
- Jack, Gavin & Westwood, Robert (2009) *International and Cross-cultural Management Studies: A Postcolonial Reading*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jack, G., Westwood, R., Srinivas, N. & Sardar, Z. (2011) 'Deepening, broadening and re-asserting a postcolonial interrogative space in organization studies', *Organization*, 18(3): 275–302.
- Jackson, Terence (2013) 'Reconstructing the indigenous in African management research: Implications for international management studies in a globalized world', *Management International Review*, 53(1): 13–38.
- Kincheloe, Joe L. & Steinberg, Shirley R. (2008) 'Indigenous knowledges in education: Complexities, dangers and profound benefits', in N.K. Denzin, Y.S. Lincoln and L.T. Smith

- (eds), *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 135–56.
- Knoblauch, H. (2005) 'Focused ethnography', *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 6(3): Art. 44, September. Available at www.qualitative-research.net/fqs-texte/3-05/05-3-44-e.htm (accessed on 24 August, 2017).
- Ladson-Billings, Gloria & Donnor, Jamel K. (2008) 'Waiting for the call: The moral activist role of critical race theory scholarship', in N.K. Denzin, Y.S. Lincoln and L.T. Smith (eds), *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 61–84.
- Loomba, Ania (1998) *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge.
- Lugones, Maria (2010) 'Toward a decolonial feminism', *Hypatia*, 25(4): 742–59.
- McLaren, Peter & Jaramillo, Natalia (2008) 'Rethinking critical pedagogy: Socialismo Nepantla and the specter of Che', in N.K. Denzin, Y.S. Lincoln and L.T. Smith (eds), *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 191–210.
- Maldonado-Torres, Nelson (2011) 'Enrique Dussel's liberation thought in the decolonial turn', *TRANSMODERNITY: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*, 1(1): 1–30.
- Mangaliso, Mzamo P. (2001) 'Building competitive advantage from Ubuntu: Management lessons from South Africa', *Academy of Management Executive*, 15(3): 23–34.
- Max-Neef, Manfred A. (1992) *From the Outside Looking In: Experiences in Barefoot Economics*. London: Zed Books.
- Mbembe, Achille (2001) *On the Postcolony*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Mbigi, Lovemore (1997) *Ubuntu: The African Dream in Management*. Randburg: Knowledge Resources.
- Mignolo, Walter D. (2009) 'Epistemic disobedience, independent thought and decolonial freedom', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 26(7–8): 159–81.
- Misoczky, Maria C. (2011) 'World visions in dispute in contemporary Latin America: Development x harmonic life', *Organization*, 18(3): 345–63.
- Mohanty, Chandra T. (1988) 'Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses', *Feminist Review*, 30 (Autumn): 61–88.
- Molho, Tony (2004) 'Carlo Ginzburg: Reflections on the intellectual cosmos of a 20th-century historian', *History of European Ideas*, 30(1): 121–48.
- Mourdoukoutas, Panos (1999) *The Global Corporation: The Decolonization of International Businesses*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Muecke, Stephen (1992) *Textual Spaces: Aboriginality and Cultural Studies*. Sydney: New South Wales University Press.
- Neu, Dean (2000) '"Presents" for the "Indians": Land, colonialism and accounting in Canada', *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 25(2): 163–84.
- Onyango-Ouma, W. (2006) 'Practicing anthropology at home: Challenges and ethical dilemmas', in M. Ntarangwi, D. Mills & M. Babiker (eds), *African Anthropologies: History, Critique and Practice*. London: Zedd Books, pp. 250–66.
- Özkazancı-Pan, Banu (2008) 'International management research meets "the rest of the world"', *Academy of Management Review*, 33(4): 964–74.
- Perera, Suvendrini & Pugliese, Joseph (1998) 'Parks, mines and tidy towns: Environmental panopticism, "post" colonialism, and the politics of heritage in Australia', *Postcolonial Studies*, 1(1): 9–100.
- Porsanger, Jelena (2004) 'An essay about indigenous methodology', *Nordlit*, 15: 105–20. Available at <http://septentrio.uit.no/index.php/nordlit/article/view/1910/1776> (accessed on 24 August, 2017).
- Prasad, Ansuman (2003a) 'The gaze of the other: Postcolonial theory and organizational analysis', in A. Prasad (ed.), *Postcolonial Theory and Organizational Analysis: A Critical Engagement*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 3–43.
- Prasad, Ansuman (ed.) (2003b) *Postcolonial Theory and Organizational Analysis: A critical Engagement*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Prasad, Ansuman (ed.) (2012) *Against the Grain: Advances in Postcolonial Organization Studies*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press.

- Pyett, Priscilla M. (2003) 'Validation of qualitative research in the "real world"', *Qualitative Health Research*, 13(8): 1170–9.
- Redding, S. Gordon (1990) *The Spirit of Chinese Capitalism*. New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- Restrepo, Eduardo & Escobar, Arturo (2005) 'Other anthropologies and anthropology otherwise: Steps to a world anthropologies framework', *Critique of Anthropology*, 25(2): 99–129.
- Roy, Ananya (2011) 'Slumdog cities: Rethinking subaltern urbanism', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 35(2): 223–38.
- Ruwhiu, Diane & Cathro, Virginia (2014) '"Eyes-wide-shut": Insights from an indigenous research methodology', *Emergence: Complexity & Organization*, 16(4). Available at <https://journal.emergentpublications.com/article/15327000160405/> (accessed on 24 August, 2017).
- Ruwhiu, Diane & Cone, Malcolm (2010) 'Advancing a pragmatist epistemology in organisational research', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 5(2): 108–26.
- Said, Edward W. (1978) *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Said, Edward W. (1986) 'Intellectuals in the post-colonial world'. *Salmagundi*, 70/71(Spring-Summer): 44–64.
- Sambajee, Pratima (2015) 'Rethinking non-traditional resistance at work: The case of the Indian diaspora in Mauritius', *Culture and Organisation*, 21(5): 386–408.
- Smith, Laurel C. (2012) 'Decolonizing hybridity: Indigenous video, knowledge, and diffracton', *Cultural Geographies*, 19(3): 329–48.
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwa (1999/2005) *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books.
- Spiller, Chellie & Wolfgramm, Rachel (2015) *Indigenous Spiritualities at Work: Transforming the Spirit of Enterprise* (Advances in Workplace Spiritualities: Theory, Research, and Application). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc.
- Spivak, Gayatri C. (1998/2006) *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. Oxon and New York: Routledge.
- Spivak, Gayatri C. (1999) *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Spivak, Gayatri C. (2005) 'Scattered speculations on the subaltern and the popular', *Postcolonial Studies*, 8(4): 475–86.
- Stewart-Harawira, Makere (2013) 'Challenging knowledge capitalism. Indigenous research in the 21st century', *Socialist Studies*, 9(1): 39–51.
- Tedmanston, Deidre (2008) 'Isle of exception: Sovereign power and palm island', *Critical Perspectives in International Business*, 4(2/3): 142–65.
- Tsui, Anne S. (2004) 'Contributing to global management knowledge: A case for high quality indigenous research', *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 21(4): 491–513.
- Tuck, Eve & Yang, K. Wayne (2012) 'Decolonization is not a metaphor', *Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1): 1–40.
- Tyson, T. N., Fleischman, R. K. & Oldroyd, D. (2004) 'Theoretical perspectives on accounting for labor on slave plantations of the USA and British West Indies', *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal*, 17(5): 758–78.
- Vambe, Maurice T. (2001) *Orality and Cultural Identities*. Gweru: Mambo Press.
- Vambe, Maurice T. (2004) *Africa Oral Storytelling Tradition and the Zimbabwean Novel in English*. Pretoria: University of South Africa Press.
- Weston, Alia (2012) 'Creativity in the Informal Economy of Zimbabwe'. PhD Dissertation. Kingston University, Kingston-upon-Thames.
- Westwood, Robert (2001) 'Appropriating the other in the discourses of comparative management', in S. Linstead & R. Westwood (eds), *The Language of Organization*. London: Sage, pp. 241–82.
- Westwood, Robert (2006) 'International business and management studies as an orientalist discourse: A postcolonial critique', *Critical Perspectives on International Business*, 2(2): 91–113.
- Westwood, Robert & Jack, Gavin (2007) 'Manifesto for a post-colonial international business and management studies: A provocation', *Critical Perspectives on International Business*, 3(3): 246–65.

- Whiteman, Gail & Cooper, William H. (2000) 'Ecological embeddedness', *Academy of Management Journal*, 43(6): 1265–82.
- Xu, Qi (2008) 'A question concerning subject in the spirit of Chinese capitalism', *Critical Perspectives on International Business*, 4(2/3): 242–76.
- Young, Robert, J.C. (2003) *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Young, Robert J.C. (2008) *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Zavala, M. (2013) 'What do we mean by decolonizing research strategies? Lessons from decolonizing, indigenous research projects in New Zealand and Latin America', *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 2(1): 55–71.

Feminist Methodologies

Nancy Harding

INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to under-estimate the influence of feminist theory on contemporary qualitative research methods. A brief outline of the history of qualitative methods illuminates this, and provides a necessary context for understanding why there is a need for separate and distinct 'feminist' research methods.

Arguments about the quantitative/qualitative divide dominated debates about research in the 1970s. Strong epistemological distinctions were made (Alastalo, 2008) and scientism's positivist, objectivist approach dominated understanding of qualitative methods (Packer, 2011). The researcher (presumptively male) was required to be 'cool, distant and rational' (Fontana & Frey, 2000, quoted in Packer, 2011, p. 47), and unbiased and non-evaluative. He was powerful, authoritative, distanced, impartial and above all objective, his objectivity ensuring the

credibility of his research (Oakley, 1981). The topics he studied were those of the public space. 'Women's interests' were regarded as emotional or personal issues, and were deemed to be so unworthy of study they did not even make it into the realm of potential research topics. Research participants were overwhelmingly male, and when women were included their voices were silenced. For example, Karp's (1987) exploration of job satisfaction 'beyond midlife' seemed to seek a balance between the sexes (39 male and 33 female participants), but the interview quotes he uses are predominantly from male informants, with women quoted largely when discussing physical appearance.

That is, before feminism's influence, research was something carried out by men who studied men and male public lives. Men were unmarked and normative, both the ground on which research (and life) rested and the model on which others should base themselves. Such phallogentric discourses,

although much attacked, continue to circulate and are found in the most unexpected of places, including gender itself. For example, there has been little interrogation of the epistemological and methodological assumptions that inform ‘men and masculinities’ (Pini & Pease, 2013).

A BRIEF HISTORY OF FEMINISM

An understanding of history provides insight into the rationale for ongoing debates in feminist research. Briefly, first-wave feminism, as it has come to be called, emerged in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and is perhaps best remembered for its struggles for women’s rights, notably the rights to vote and own property. Change was slow, even after the right to vote was won in the UK a century ago. Women took over ‘men’s’ jobs during World War II but were summarily returned to the kitchen sink at its end. It is difficult to imagine how different from today were women’s lives (in the UK) just a generation or two ago. The concept of ‘career’ hardly existed for our mothers and grandmothers: paid less than men for doing similar work, they were expected to give up paid work on marriage or childbirth. Our grandmothers had no financial independence and women remained until comparatively recently the property of their husbands, with no rights to a bank account or to own property, no voice and little influence. Second-wave feminism challenged this. The Women’s Movement arose in the 1960s, used consciousness raising as a means of change, fought patriarchy and facilitated the entry of women into academia.

Second-wave feminists were subsequently accused of propounding one model of ‘the woman’ – white, middle class, heterosexual – and of silencing women who do not conform with this narrow ideal. In response third-wave feminism, originating in the 1990s (see Nicholson, 2013, for a

critique of the ‘wave’ metaphor), explores not only gender but also race, class, sexuality, ethnicity and other forms of oppressive influences on women’s lives. Third-wave feminist theory is diverse, fragmented and contested. Influenced by poststructural theories it explores how, in neoliberalist regimes, the self is a project to be worked on, within conditions that both influence and constrain the possibilities of subjectivities and selves. Thus the unified subject or ‘the’ woman has disappeared from feminist debate. This may be the ultimate development of second-wave feminism’s critique of essentialism. However, if there is no such thing as an essentialised woman, “‘the’ woman”, then what or who is the subject of feminist theory and politics (Thomas & Davies, 2005)? One answer is found in ‘strategic essentialism’ (Spivak, 1996). This means that we can call ourselves ‘women’ so as to recognize ourselves as part of a category that remains oppressed and use that recognition to continue the struggle against that oppression. At the same time, strategic essentialism rejects essentialist arguments and argues that there is nothing that marks women out as ‘a woman’. In MOS this argument was developed by Knights & Kerfoot (2004), who argued the need to examine how representations of gender are constituted/constitutive, and challenge the reification of terms that are attached to concepts of ‘men’ and ‘women’. More generally, third-wave feminism challenges the meanings attached to femininity but retains an abiding political project of refusing the denigration of those who occupy the subject position of ‘woman’ (Budgeon, 2013). Finally, the emergence of the digital age is signalling the emergence of fourth-wave feminism, but also post-feminism, so the picture is again changing quickly.

In this light, feminist research methods are part of an evolving and developing political project that is not only anti-patriarchal but against all forms of abjection and abuse.

WHAT ARE 'FEMINIST RESEARCH METHODS'?

Feminist research methods are *not* concerned merely with ensuring that women are included in research – that does little to address inequalities. They also do not seek to have only women studying women – that would mimic male research models. However, the study of women by women is an important aspect of feminist research. To understand what is meant by feminist research methods we must start with second-wave feminist scholars' epistemic project of challenging how knowledge itself was (and is) understood (Stanley & Wise, 1983). This is inter-linked with feminism's political intent, its focus on egalitarianism and its aim to challenge discrimination and disadvantage through undermining the reproduction of power and dominance. Overwhelmingly, feminist research asks political, moral and ethical questions, so we must distinguish between 'method' (techniques for gathering data); methodology (how should research proceed?) and epistemology (theories of knowledge, or how research can be carried out) (Sandra Harding, 1987).

FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGIES

Epistemology asks who can be knowers, what is 'knowledge' and what kinds of things can be known. Feminists' entry into research shattered prevailing presumptions of the universality and objectivity of the (masculine) physical and social sciences. For example, Donna Haraway's *Primate visions* (1989) destabilised primatology through showing how masculine primatologists projected their own understanding of (human) masculinity onto the great apes. Biology textbooks were rewritten following Emily Martin's (1991) illumination of how they portrayed the meeting of the (tiny) sperm and the (dominant) egg as a stereotypical heterosexual romance (active male/passive female).

However, there is no such thing as a single, unitary feminist epistemological perspective. Feminist thinkers work in all, or nearly all, academic disciplines, where they cover the gamut from positivist to poststructuralist, positivism to idealism, and empiricism to poststructuralism. What they have in common is a focus on oppressed identities, and a sharing of basic epistemological principles of: a focus on the subjective and personal, a reflexive understanding of gender asymmetry, the research's ethical impact, and its ability to empower and bring about change (Cook & Fonow, 1990). All these can be seen in Womersley et al.'s (2011) study of how affect (in this case shame) is co-constructed within the interview setting. Their feminist frame necessitated 'a commitment to understanding the ways in which gender is a social production, formed, reproduced, and modified within the intersubjective' (p. 879), plus 'a critical attention to positionality, reflexivity, the production of knowledge, and the power relationships that are inherent in research processes' (op. cit). Data analysis required tracking how affect influenced the interviews through understanding the form of the conversation, the content of the dialogue and the researcher's own emotional memory of the event.

There are thus guidelines for carrying out feminist research, but these cut across the numerous philosophical, theoretical and epistemological positions within which feminist theories are developed. A discipline that features such major thinkers as Judith Butler, Nancy Fraser, Donna Haraway, Sandra Harding, Luce Irigaray, Julie Kristeva, Karen Barad and numerous others, covering a spectrum of disciplines across the physical and social sciences, arts and humanities, has a rich heritage for researchers seeking to locate their work within a feminist epistemology.

In what follows, I will introduce standpoint theory, poststructural approaches and refer briefly to intersectionality. There is no space in which to explore transnational and postcolonial epistemologies, capitalist production,

new materialism, new organisational forms, transnational feminist networks, radical or liberal approaches, or other emergent approaches. However, these and other epistemologies are discussed in feminist literature in MOS, so a treasure-trove of ideas awaits the researcher keen to go beyond this introductory chapter (see Calás & Smircich, 1999, for an excellent discussion). I am devoting space to feminist standpoint theory, which some now regard as somewhat dated, because it is one of the few epistemological positions unique to feminist theory, and the debates that crystallised in standpoint approaches provide the context for contemporary approaches.

Standpoint Theory

This is perhaps one of the most influential of feminist epistemologies to emerge from second-wave feminism. Standpoint theories aim to advance a feminist epistemology, or theory of knowledge, that involves development of effective knowledge from the standpoint of women's experiences. Its roots are in Marxist feminist theory (see Nancy Hartsock, 1998). Its various protagonists argue, first, that subordinated groups see the world from their own location, which powerful groups are unaware of. Second, their very survival requires that they understand the cultures of the powerful, so they also see the world within the perspective of the dominant culture (see especially Patricia Hill Collins, 2000). This is the 'double vision' of the 'outsider within'.

Standpoint perspectives, by definition, refuse the concept of the homogeneous 'woman'. They recognise differences between women on account of race, class, ethnicity and sexuality, with researchers exploring women's location at standpoints of class, race, etc. The focus is not on the individual but the group (see, for example, Reynolds, 2010). Core to all standpoint perspectives is the need to understand relationships between power, knowledge, material experiences and epistemology.

Standpoint theories have been subjected to much internal and external critique and development (see Sandra Harding's edited book (2004)). Although 30 years old, the concept remains active, debated and informative. For example, a special edition of the journal *Hypatia* in 2009 updated the debates (see also Kristen Intemann's (2010) analysis of 25 years of standpoint feminism). Its continuing relevance in MOS is suggested by Martin's (2001) use of women's standpoints to understand men's mobilisation of masculinities in organisations, as 'not primarily directed towards women, but enacted in the presence of women, that men see as natural and harmless, but women often experience as harmful' and exclusionary (p. 589).

Poststructural Feminist Epistemologies

A very different approach is found in post-structuralist gender theories that challenge the stability, biological or constructed, of masculinity and femininity. Poststructural theory argues they are fluid and historically mutable. Foucault (1979, 1986, 1992) facilitates the argument that male and female, the hetero- and homosexual, even the body, are conceptions of the Western industrialised era. There could be 'literally hundreds of possible sexes that humans can inhabit' (Hester, 2004, p. 218), but these are compressed into two cultural codes (Foucault, 1994) used when making sense of gender (Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Barry et al., 2006). One of the most influential theorists in this body of work is Judith Butler, whose early work in *Gender trouble* (1990) and *Bodies that matter* (1993) proposed that gender is not determined by biology but 'is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies' (1990, p. 136). Bodies and genders are performatively constituted, that is, through constant repetition of micro-movements of the body occurring within a set of meanings that limit possibilities of what/who we can become.

These meanings pre-exist us: we are born into them and learn how to move within them to ‘constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self’ (1990, p. 140). That is, there is no female, male or other gender identity that pre-exists the ‘expressions’ of gender; rather, the female and the male are constituted through the acts that performatively achieve gendered bodies.

Poststructural MOS researchers explore how organisations constitute subjects as masculine or feminine. For example, Brewis et al. (1997) argued that ‘Gender divides humanity into “masculine” or “feminine”’ (p. 1275) but it is ‘the discourse of gender difference’ that constitutes the differences, such that ‘The concepts of masculine and feminine have no a priori grounding in material reality – they are labels arbitrarily imposed on particular ways of behaving’ (p. 1277). Linstead & Pullen (2006) warn that the binary of male/female continues to inform poststructural organisational thought (p. 1289) and indeed the binary creeps back in even where it is least welcome. For example, Bowring’s (2004) study of *Star Trek*’s Captain Janeway, and Muhr’s (2011) study of a cyborgian leader, papers that use film, television and other media as the sources of ‘data’, are forward-looking in exploring gender fluidity, but the fluidity they write of moves between masculine and feminine characteristics and thus remains within the traditional binary of male/female (see also Linstead & Thomas, 2002; Linstead & Brewis, 2004). Others explore the means through which the binary is constituted and sustained. Linstead and Brewis (2004), for example, suggest ‘a binary is not simply constituted by its poles, but by the media between those poles’ (p. 361), while Borgerson and Rehn (2004) define fluidity of gender identity as ‘the space between’ (p. 461) the two poles of a dualism, such as male/female. They argue that ‘the quality of fluidity does not apply at the level of gender, but at the level of traits said to constitute gender’ (p. 469).

Feminist poststructural epistemologies are influential not only in exploring the constitution of sex, gender and sexualities, but

organisational identities more generally (For excellent case examples, see Kondo, 1990; and Trethewey, 1997).

Intersectional Feminist Epistemologies

Chapter 26 of this book discusses intersectionality in some depth, but its discussion cannot be omitted from a chapter headed ‘Feminist research methods’ because some academics argue that feminist theory today *is* intersectionality theory. That is, gender or sex cannot be understood in isolation from other socio-cultural categories such as age, ethnicity, class, sexuality, disability, etc., because women (and men) are not just their sex/gender, but are also marked by and constitute their identities within and through these other categories. Thus, gender/sex is understood to intersect with these other categories, becoming mutually intertwined with them. Intersectionalities emerged out of postcolonial and anti-racist feminists’ critiques of the hegemonic tendencies of white, middle-class Western feminism to posit themselves as a ‘we’ to an unspecified ‘they’ (see Chandra T. Mohanty’s influential paper, ‘Under Western eyes’, 1988, and Kimberley Crenshaw (1989)).

In the US, much intersectionality theory work has been undertaken by women of colour, leading to the charge (Puar, 2012) that white women have been let off the hook of their complicity in participating in practices of abjection and humiliation of others. It follows that intersectionality theorists emphasise the importance not only of studying those who are subordinated or excluded, but also of analysing the normative ‘we’ that constructs, reproduces and benefits from relations of dominance (Walby et al., 2012, p. 230). An analysis of power relations is vitally important in this approach, as is exploration of how the categories and their intersections are themselves constructed, and how the intersections are ‘done’ (Lykke, 2010).

The analysis of intersectionality in MOS is in its infancy, despite the pioneering work of

Joan Acker (2006) and her understanding of organisations as the sites of emergence and perpetuation of inequalities. But important work for MOS academics planning to incorporate intersectionality into their feminist research methods includes Holvino (2010), who argues the need to understand the linkages between everyday organisational practices and external, societal influences. Bell & Nkomo (2001) have illuminated how white female staff display gender blindness while black female staff arm themselves psychologically against the consequences of racism, and Boogaard & Roggeband's (2010) study of the Dutch police force shows the complexities of intersectional identities, in that individuals both openly challenge inequalities and actively reproduce them. This study should be read alongside Healy et al.'s (2011) research, which shows how inequality regimes are sustained in the face of sophisticated anti-discrimination policies and legal duties. Finally, Woodhams et al. (2013) demonstrate that penalties associated with multiple disadvantage exponentially increase as disadvantages seem to interact to the detriment of people at 'intersections'.

These studies suggest that Thomas and Davies's (2005) lovely paper, 'What have the feminists done for us?', which explored the value of feminist theory for understanding resistance, needs updating, because contemporary feminist thinkers offer further insightful, impact-full ways of carrying out research in MOS.

I turn now to feminist methodologies. I will suggest that feminism shares methodologies with qualitative research more generally, but can bring new insights into how those methodologies can be mobilised in researching organisations.

FEMINIST METHODOLOGIES

A major point to note when discussing feminist methodologies is the quantitative/qualitative divide. Oakley (2000, p. 3) wrote: 'in

the methodological literature today, the "quantitative"/ "qualitative" dichotomy functions chiefly as a gendered ideological representation' and that 'within this gendering of methodology, experimental methods are seen as the most "quantitative" and "hard", with qualitative methods "soft" and thus feminine'. In 1993, Stanley and Wise had argued that this bifurcation is associated with Cartesian dualism and the mind/body split. Cartesian dualism's ontology is one that proposes two opposing principles, masculinity and femininity, that it disseminates through the sociocultural, so that 'the very grounds of reality are presupposed in binary and gendered terms' (p. 194).

Quantitative research is presumed therefore to support the masculine status quo, and despite Oakley's (2000) advocacy of quantitative methods, there is a 'disinclination of those most fully engaged with feminism to use quantitative methods' (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 573). That is, only 16 per cent of articles in which authors take an avowedly feminist position include quantitative analysis, whether mixed methods or solely quantitative. In contrast, non-feminist research into women is dominated by quantitative methods. There is a sharp distinction between the US (preference for quantitative research) and the UK (preference for qualitative research), with US journals offering publishing spaces that take women as the object, not subject, of research. In MOS's most highly ranked journals, women are over-represented and men are under-represented in published qualitative studies as compared to non-qualitative authors (Plowman & Smith, 2011). However, note how these authors continue a functionalist approach that draws a sharp distinction between men and women, looking for the differences between them, and that they do not distinguish between feminist, gender and woman-oriented research as Cohen et al.'s (2011) study does.

But apart from the preference for qualitative approaches, feminists draw upon the range of methodological research approaches available within the social sciences. The

best feminist research adapts each methodology to ensure that women (and other participants) are incorporated into every stage of the research process, from design of the research to its dissemination. This is because, as the above discussion of theoretical perspectives makes clear, researchers using a feminist approach believe research should begin from everyday experiences and that the voices of research participants should be heard. We will find something similar when we explore the methods feminist researchers use to gather empirical materials.

THE CHOICE OF RESEARCH TOPIC

Again, there are no limitations or rules, but feminist researchers often write movingly of how aspects of their own lives, for which they may have no definite labels, inform the choice of their research topic. Others write of exploring topics that, once the research is under way, illuminate differences between male and female participants that cast light on the whole experience being explored. For Paget (1981, in DeVault, 1999), women, but not male, artists experienced ‘ontological anguish’ about the appropriateness of their working as artists. That is, feminist researchers identify aspects of women’s lives that are so taken-for-granted they are hardly available to conscious thought.

FEMINIST RESEARCH METHODS: TECHNIQUES FOR GATHERING EMPIRICAL MATERIALS

As noted above, feminist research approaches evolved in response to an understanding that epistemologies of research privileged men (not only as knowers and as subjects of research, but also as dictators of what shall be legitimised as ‘knowledge’) while silencing and/or excluding women and the issues

that may be pertinent to women. Feminist research methods sought to make redress through researching issues pertinent to women and legitimising women’s knowledge, including women as both researchers and participants in research. But the means by which empirical materials are acquired (methods) are generally those found in non-feminist research methods texts: interviews, focus groups, documentary analysis, ethnography, etc. However, they differ in practice.

Feminists have always been highly critical of the demand for objectivity and detachment: they argue the need to do just the opposite. Oakley (1981) argued, influentially, that the traditional research interview obscured the hierarchical and exploitative character of the encounter, and that far from being ‘dangerous bias’, personal involvement ‘is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives’ (1981, p. 58). Feminist methods therefore aim to ‘subvert [...] the established procedures of disciplinary practice tied to the agendas of the powerful’ (DeVault, 1999, p. 59). Researchers who do not explore how their personal, professional and social histories influence how they frame their research will ‘inevitably reproduce dominant gender, race, and class biases’ (Naples, 2003, p. 3). Interviews should therefore be conversations in which researcher and participant collaborate as partners in the research, with the researcher actively involved in the interview. This approach, somewhat revolutionary 30 years ago, has now become a signifier of good research skills.

However, feminist research methods offer one intriguing addition to our repertoire of qualitative research skills: they explore silences and the half-said. There is a strong body of feminist theory that argues women have no language of their own, so they (we) have to use a masculine language that does not encompass female experience. (For a discussion of Cixous’s perspective on the silencing of women and its application in MOS, see Phillips et al., 2014, and for an analysis of

Irigaray's arguments and its implications for feminist research in MOS, see Fotaki et al., 2014.) It follows that 'the unspoken, the inaudible, the ignored' give insights that cannot be made through concentrating on the spoken word alone (Mazzei, 2003). Such a recognition of lack of language and/or voice has several implications for research.

First, if masculine discourses position women such that they lack a language with which to speak about their experiences, then researchers need to be able to explore aspects of women's lives that may be incompletely articulated. This requires moving beyond terms that frame activities, such as 'housework', to explore what is hidden behind words that reduce complex activities to something that appears easy and straightforward – and thus hardly worthy of study. We therefore have to listen actively for what appears so familiar and taken-for-granted that we hardly notice it, or things we think we understand so well that we need not explore them in any depth. Careful probing skills are necessary to elicit understanding of these things.

Second, if the language available to women cannot encapsulate so much of their experiences, then the feminist researcher should become adept not only at listening to silences and the not-said, but also to translating the stumbling half-said. This requires using our own experiences – filling the silences with our own understanding helps understand what is 'incompletely said' (DeVault, 1999, p. 67). Researching work–life, balance, say, would require probing a mention of 'housework' to find out what it involves, how it is done, the politics and affect around its doing, the implications for not doing it, etc.

Feminists often understand silence in terms of an oppressed otherness. For example, Tsalach's (2013) auto-ethnographic account explores how and why she could not speak when she was herself the subject of oppression. This has a political intent: 'Focusing directly on oppressive experiences often means saying what cannot be said and attempting to learn what is not

knowable' (Tsalach, 2013, p. 77), so as to fight subjugation and subordination. Indeed, much feminist research is devoted to exploring how oppression is articulated within and through the lives and bodies of women. Care is needed: researchers may not share class, race, ethnicity or (lack of) agency with research participants, so may unknowingly influence them or lack insights vital for interpreting the empirical materials. However, researchers cognizant of power and class differentials between themselves and participants can explore interviews as a microcosm of the wider social world where privileged and oppressed meet.

However, in MOS wordlessness may signify silence rather than a lack of language. There may be impositions (such as fear of retaliation from management) that prevent speech (Glenn, 2004). As Milliken & Wolfe Morrison (2003) suggest, in organisations silence is 'a choice that is made when there is a fear of the consequences of speaking, or when normative and social pressures inhibit what can be said'.

Incorporating one's personal involvement in the research is thus core to much feminist research methodology, in ways that exceed forms of reflexivity regarding how researchers influence their research. That is, we acknowledge traditions of 'woman talk', where female participants in conversation engage in helping each other to develop ideas. The feminist interview is thus one in which two people participate in a conversation, sharing understanding and attempting to minimise power disparities between the two, and drawing on their own biographies and interests in doing so. There is value and legitimacy in understanding researchers' own experiences of the fieldwork (Letherby, 2003; Gilmore & Kenny, 2015). This includes studies involving male participants: gendered power play may be insightful, reflecting the wider sociality, but also difficult and painful. However, we may be too certain about our own empathic abilities and self-knowledge, and mistakenly feel we 'know' research participants when we don't.

Other Methods

Feminist researchers bring a feminist sensitivity and understanding to other types of research method, offering useful insights for all qualitative researchers, feminist or not. For example, Haynes (2011) offers valuable insights into auto-ethnographical research. One of her first points could be written by any insightful researcher using auto-ethnography: 'What is important ... is not the truth or falsity of my autoethnographical account, but the way in which our perceptions of reality are part of an interpretive process of understanding our experiences within the social world' (p. 137). But her feminist stance leads, in a moving account, to the necessity of protecting the 'I' who emerges from the auto-ethnographical research. Haynes's motivation was to 'explore the self in relation to wider socio-cultural and political phenomena, in the fundamental autoethnographical sense'. The required first person narrative 'invokes a degree of vulnerability necessary to scrutinise the self and reveal it to others in order to understand the social context' (p. 144). Haynes advocates an ethic of care in relation to the researcher self, to protect that self from emotional harm.

A research method long popular in MOS is shadowing. Gill's (2011) feminist understanding of ethnography suggests a need to question rules and guidelines about shadowing. It is impossible for the ethnographer to fade into the background, she argues, and both participants and researcher will be engaged in identity work as one is shadowed by the other, because, as Cunliffe (2010, p. 11) writes, the researcher and researched 'are always selves-in-relation-to-others'. Further, negotiations between researcher and researched are always layered in differences such as gender, age, class, education, sexuality, etc. Gill recounts her different experiences of shadowing three entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurial labour and tasks performed across the cases were relatively the same, but it was in the gendered portrayal

of entrepreneurship that the entrepreneurial experience seemed to matter (pp. 122–23). Thus, Gill's feminist insights lead her to conclude that the researcher who is shadowing participants is involved in constructing the very thing she is studying (p. 128).

But feminist methods do not exist, as such – feminists undertake interviews, organise focus groups, analyse documents, engage in ethnography, etc. These become feminist when carried out within and through feminist epistemologies and ontologies. In other words, it is theory-led research that characterises feminist research, not the methods *per se*. Overall, the feminist research interview is one where solidarity and empathy, rather than critical distance, is the guiding approach, alongside recognition of how gendering influences interactions between participants. This introduces new ways of thinking about qualitative research more generally.

DATA ANALYSIS

Feminist research draws on the familiar range of data analysis methods, but they are adapted to conform to the feminist principles outlined above, such that we may talk about 'feminist discourse analysis', 'feminist narrative analysis', 'feminist deconstruction', 'feminist textual analysis', etc. However, while these share a heritage with their non-feminist counterparts, I will highlight two areas that emerge specifically out of feminist theories.

The first is the analysis of silences and hesitations (discussed above). Some might see this as a form of feminist discourse analysis, but I distinguish it from discourse analysis more generally because (1) it is located in feminist theoretical perspectives that argue women lack voice or language, while (2) the sorts of hesitations and silences recognised by feminist researchers seem to include little that can be identified as 'codes', so they get lost during data reduction. DeVault's

(1999) guidelines on this are comprehensive. She recommends looking for difficulties of expression, such as 'I don't quite know how to put it', or 'you know' – these signify the failure of language to encapsulate experiences inadequately coded in standard vocabulary. There are instead inarticulate, content-free mumbling and hesitations that are discarded during data reduction because they appear to contain little relevant information. 'Often', writes DeVault (1999, p. 69), 'this halting, hesitant, tentative talk signals the realm of not-quite-articulated experience, where standard vocabulary is inadequate, and where a respondent tries to speak from experience and finds language wanting'. Further, phrases such as 'you know' are consequential for the joint production of talk in the interview (DeVault, 1999, p. 67). A participant saying 'you know' signifies far more than the mere words suggest. It encapsulates an understanding, DeVault writes (1999, p. 68), that 'OK, this next bit is going to be a little tricky. I can't say it quite right, but help me out a little; meet me halfway and you'll understand what I mean'. If we have honoured such requests on a woman-to-woman level, as we do when we nod and murmur 'um hmm', we are 'doing with ... respondents what we women have done for generations – understanding each other' (De Vault, 1999, p. 69). That is, researchers' own resources as women serve as resources for analysing empirical materials. We should therefore draw on our own responses to interview participants or to the experience of the interview to analyse the 'unnoticed matrix of social organization that constructs both the interview talk and [the] emotional reaction to it' (DeVault, 1999, p. 72). Analysis may actually start with our own emotional response.

In sum, through drawing on our own experiences as women when analysing empirical materials, the researcher's own experience of gendering becomes a kind of method (DeVault, 1999, p. 71), requiring that 'feminist researchers need a more disciplined use of the personal' (ibid.).

The second specifically feminist approach to data analysis I will discuss here relates to the feminist new materialism theory of Karen Barad (2007). Feminist researchers working with Barad's theory of performativity focus on data 'hot spots' (MacLure, 2013, in Ringrose and Renold, 2014) that 'glow' for the researcher, whether encountered during the fieldwork, analysis or later. This approach takes feminist reflexivity to a new level. Hot spots are analysed through a diffractive analysis that makes 'new mappings, onto-epistemological mappings' that allow 'something new to emerge' (Davies, 2014, p. 734). Diffraction, in Barad's words (2007, p. 30), involves not fixing 'what is the object and what is the subject in advance ... diffraction involves reading insights through one another in ways that help illuminate differences as they emerge: how different differences get made, what gets excluded, and how these exclusions matter'. The focus is on the moment of the encounter between researcher and researched (Davies, 2014), and on all the texts that inform that encounter, and the texts that inform those texts. They 'intra-act' (Barad, 2007); that is, they are mutually constituted, entangled agencies that do not precede but emerge within and through their intra-action. Multiple theoretical insights are read through each other (Mazzei, 2014, p. 742). Harding, Ford and Lee (2017) argue that this negates the concept of the solo researcher immersed in her data. Instead, data analysis becomes a group task involving debate, discussion, close questioning of each participant, and multiple readings of each theme through all the other themes, and through the reviewers' comments.

WRITING UP

Feminist researchers in MOS tend to adopt the academic style of writing favoured by qualitative researchers in general. The violence of this 'masculinist' style of writing is

increasingly critiqued by feminist authors in MOS and other disciplines. Most notably, Phillips et al. (2014) have shown how the influence of scientific writing constitutes the discipline of MOS as masculine. The emphasis on rigorous method and rationality requires that writing be exact, hard and have a 'penetrating conclusiveness' (Phillips et al., 2014, p. 316). Such requirements are 'genealogically entangled with the meaning of masculinity' (ibid.); the scholar is a 'man of reason', even if the scholar would identify as female. The orthodoxy is that the only gender that can be done legitimately in research (by men or women) is a masculinity from which the feminine is purged (Phillips et al., 2014). This, Fotaki et al. (2014) argue, is a form of unintended violence – the discriminatory exclusionary practices embedded in organisational language perpetuates the continued marginalisation and silencing of women. We thus need a 'language and means of symbolization ... with which to speak differently about organizations and organizing' (Fotaki et al., 2014, p. 1244). We need a feminine writing that is 'unruly, unbounded and polluting of the very concept of organization' (Phillips et al., 2014, p. 314).

The aim is not to replace masculinist writing: rather, the masculine/feminine dualism itself should be disrupted through destabilisation and confusion (Phillips et al., 2014), and through a writing from the body that seeks not to inseminate the reader with the brilliance of its ideas (Fotaki et al., 2014) but to offer its writing as a gift to the other that '*enables the other* rather than appropriating the other's difference in order to construct and glorify the self through rigorous and masterful knowledge' (Phillips et al., 2014, p. 324). Rather than insemination there should be birth and nurturing – of ideas, thoughts, political movements, inspiration, feelings and the becoming-human (Fotaki et al., 2014). Feminists should therefore aim to write from bodies that create a relational space for production, writing and sharing, a space in which to give birth to understanding.

Phillips et al. (2014, p. 322) advocate bisexual writing, by which is meant a mode of escaping from boundaries, of being 'illusive, playful, seductive and fluid' (p. 324), thus challenging the 'truths' that dominate MOS. This means working with *difference*, invention, daring not to know and dismantling the authorial 'I' into its numerous, shifting pieces. It does not do away with the masculine but works outside and through it, seducing it through the fluidity of the feminine to weave new ethical relations.

But how may we write in such ways? Feminists are experimenting with new forms of academic writing. I will first outline the work of four authors from other disciplines whose books (rather than papers) offer potential models for MOS researchers to adapt. I will then briefly explore how Jenny Helin is taking forward this work of 'writing differently' in MOS.

Denise Riley (2005) writes like a philosopher-poet, or poet-philosopher. Her writing drips with metaphor. It is often difficult to understand intellectually but can be felt viscerally. Riley thus points towards a haptic mode of writing, which engages readers through the flesh and the nervous system, rather than the brain. For example, where Butler (1997: 3–4) writes of hate speech:

To be injured by speech is to suffer a loss of context, that is, not to know where you are. Indeed, it may be that what is unanticipated about the injurious speech act is what constitutes its injury, the sense of putting an addressee out of control. ... Exposed at the moment of such a shattering is precisely the volatility of one's 'place' within the community of speakers; one can be 'put in one's place' by such speech, but such a place may be no place.

Denise Riley writes of the same experience:

The worst words revivify themselves within us, vampirically. Injurious speech echoes relentlessly, years after the occasion of its utterance, in the mind of the one at whom it was aimed: the bad word, splinterlike, pierces to lodge. In its violently emotional materiality, the word is indeed made flesh and dwells amongst us – often long

outstaying its welcome. Old word-scars embody a 'knowing it by heart' as if phrases had been hurled like darts into that thickly pulsating organ. But their resonances are not amorous. Where amnesia would help us, we can't forget. (Riley, 2005, p. 1)

Film theorist Annette Kuhn's (2002) approach is very different. Family photographs are the 'data' that, interpreted, offer a history of the second half of the twentieth century. Kuhn's rationale for using personal memories is that the psychic and the social are so intertwined that the analysis of the self is an analysis of the social. Analysing the 'I', she argues, makes it immanent rather than transcendental, but requires greater demands of our analytical procedures. This facilitates study of moment-to-moment experiences of the self – writing from the embodied 'me' – and thus fights against 'methodolatry'. For instance, she writes of class:

Class is something beneath your clothes, under your skin, in your reflexes, in your psyche, at the very core of your being. In the all-encompassing English class system, if you know that you are in the 'wrong' class, you know that therefore you are a valueless person (p. 116). That is, there is 'something shameful and wrong about you, that you are inarticulate and stupid, have nothing to say of any value or importance, that no-one will listen to you in any case, that you are undeserving, unentitled, cannot think properly, are incapable of 'getting it right'. ...And you learn that these feelings may return to haunt you for the rest of your life' (ibid.). Those of us who are working class learn not to speak, we learn to be silent 'through shame' and 'the hardest thing of all is to find a voice: not the voice of the monstrous singular ego, but one that, summoning the resources of the place we come from, can speak with eloquence of, and for, that place' (p. 123).

Kuhn explores the viscerally stored memories evoked through photographs, while anthropologist Kathleen Stewart analyses affect. She explores the ordinary of the everyday, interweaving accounts from her own life with those from her anthropological studies, describing Stewart the anthropologist as 'she'. In *Ordinary affects* (2007) she explores:

the varied, surging capacities to affect and to be affected that give everyday life the quality of a continual motion of relations, scenes, contingencies, and emergences. They're things that happen. They happen in impulses, sensations, expectations, daydream, encounters, and habits of relating, in strategies and their failures, in forms of persuasion, contagion, and compulsion, in modes of attention, attachment, and agency and in publics and social worlds of all kinds that catch people up in something that feels like something (p. 1–2).

She writes in short, seemingly disconnected passages of pure description, and then introduces a short analysis that builds iteratively to a deeply insightful understanding of contemporary life in the USA. For instance, she writes of 'disappearing acts':

Ecstatic little forms of disappearance have budded up. We dream the dream of a finished life. The dream job or the dream body settles into a perfect form.

Or we dream of the kind of magic that comes in a flash. The sweepstakes cameras appear at your door when you are still in your housedress, and big bunches of balloons in primary colors are released into the air. Or UFOs come in the night and lift you up in an out-of-this-world levitation trick.

Disappearance has always been the genius of the so-called masses. We are gifted dreamers of getting away from it all, giving capture the slip, if only by slipping into the cocoon of a blank surface.

Blankness has blanketed the country, spreading smoothly through the comfortable uniformity of theme parks and gated communities, and the sprawling new shopping meccas of big-box stores for every corner of life – home, pets, coffee, books, garden, bed and bath, pizza, tacos, hamburgers, toys, babies, office.

Banality is the vitality of the times. You can slip into any of the places where it's on display and check out for a while without ever feeling disconnected for a second (pp. 48–9).

Finally, Kathleen Angel's *'Unmastered: A book on desire, most difficult to tell'* (2012) is where pornographic novel and philosophical text meet. She provides a penetratingly subjective account of a love affair in which her intense desire for the man (not The Man) illuminates

embodiment, passion, feminist theory, and understanding of how romance undoes the woman, rendering her docile and tamed. The book's pages are often blank, or contain only a few lines – we are invited into white space. For me, her complex intertwining of personal and theoretical illuminates Lacan's (1998) Seminar XX, on 'The Woman'. For example, she writes of how a woman's desires make her feel guilty if she espouses them. But (p. 200) whose desires are they? 'these desires rioting noisily through me – whose are they? They are mine, and yours, and anyone else's. They have found their way inside me, and taken up residence. They have folded their arms, and said, Ha. Ha' (p. 200). In the 'sanitised hyperreal' (p. 220), women are governed by 'unruly, lustful' bodies whose 'unbridled, guilty febrility', a desire they may not have chosen, ties them to a 'personal Magus' and in so doing requires that the (heterosexual) woman 'take[s] a scythe' to herself and 'hack[s] at her roots' so that she does not surpass the man in achievement. Woman has learned to rein in her desire and herself to become something a man promises to fulfil, so that 'In order for the woman to live, her love for the man has to die'.

These indications of how to write outside the straitjacket of Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Data Analysis, Discussion and Conclusion involve far more than writing first-person accounts of one's own experiences (Vickers, 2015). In MOS, Helin (2015) is reaching towards such a goal. Her inspiration is Bakhtin, who allows writing about the 'messiness' experienced when doing fieldwork. The honest researcher does not tame that mess and corral it within the prison walls of scientific writing. Helin wishes to write about 'relationality and flow' rather than realism and monologic writing; she finds a model in Bakhtin's notion of the polyphonic novel, in which dialogue between the voices of reader, writer and those written about is created (p. 176.) Helin wishes to avoid the 'god position', where one looks down from on high onto one's empirical materials and imposes

structure on them. This requires positioning the writing-self within the empirical materials, where research participants are speaking. One immerses one's self in audio recordings rather than decontextualised transcripts, and then lets the writing take the author where it will. Rather than focusing on words and sentences, the researcher is attuned to utterances and how these proceed from earlier utterances and are the precedent for those that follow. Transcripts lose 'sensed, fleeting data' (p. 182), and embodied experiences. Reduction to themes, to 'one-voiced accounts', does a disservice to the people who participate in our studies. Instead, she concludes, as writers we should stay in the text, in the writing, trying out different ways of writing and letting the work unfold itself.

CONCLUSION

Feminist research in MOS is lively and well established, but the espoused use of feminist research methods remains uncommon, despite the potential of feminist research to 're-invent rather than merely recycl[e] management theory' (Limerick & O'Leary, 2006, p. 98). Feminist research shares many interests with critical approaches to management studies. Both are concerned with power, control and resistance, politics and liberation, and fighting against tyranny. The rich history of feminist research, with decades of debate and exploration of how to give voice to the marginalised, could have much to offer management researchers. Feminist epistemologies offer transformational, political potential, and assist in the discovery of secrets of oppression and resistance (Roets and Goedgeluck, 2007). As Deutssch (2004, p. 887) writes, feminist qualitative research is rooted in an understanding that the personal is not only political; it is intellectual, theoretical and part of the process of research itself. When political change fails, it can explore why alternatives have stopped being

alternatives (op. cit., p. 93). Rather than power *over*, its focus is on 'power within', 'power to create' and 'power as ability', in both the inquiry process itself and the wider world of organisations.

REFERENCES

- Acker, J. (2006) Inequality regimes. Gender, class and race in organizations. *Gender and Society*, 20:4, 441–84.
- Alastalo, M. (2008) The history of social research methods. In P. Alasuutari, L. Bickman, & J. Brannen (Eds), *The Sage handbook of social research methods*. London: Sage, pp. 26–41.
- Angel, K. (2012) *Unmastered. A book on desire, most difficult to tell*. London: Penguin Books.
- Barad K. (2007) *Meeting the universe halfway*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Barry, J., Berg, E. & Chandler, J. (2006) Academic shape shifting: Gender, management and identities in Sweden and England. *Organization*, 13:2, 275–98.
- Bell, E. & Nkomo, S.M. (2001) *Our separate ways*. Harvard: Harvard Business Review Press.
- Boogaard, B. & Roggeband, C. (2010) Paradoxes of intersectionality: Theorizing inequality in the Dutch police force through structure and agency. *Organization*, 17:1, 53–75.
- Borgerson, J. & Rehn, A. (2004) General economy and productive dualisms. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 11:4, 455–74.
- Bowring, M.A. (2004) Resistance is not futile: Liberating Captain Janeway from the masculine-feminism dualism of leadership. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 11:4, 381–405.
- Brewis, J., Hampton, M.P. & Linstead, S. (1997) Unpacking Priscilla: Subjectivity and identity in the organization of gendered appearance. *Human Relations*, 50:10, 1275–304.
- Budgeon, S. (2013) The contradictions of successful femininity. In R. Gill & C. Scharff (Eds), *New femininities. Postfeminism, neoliberalism and subjectivity*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Butler, J. (1990) *Gender trouble*. London: Routledge, Chapman & Hall.
- Butler, J. (1993) *Bodies that matter*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1997) *Excitable speech. A politics of the performative*. New York: Routledge.
- Calás, M.B. and Smircich, L. (1999). From the 'woman's point of view': Feminist approaches to organization studies. In S. Clegg, C. Hardy, W. Nord & T. Lawrence (Eds), *Studying organization: Theory and method*, pp. 284–346. London: Sage.
- Cohen, R.L., Hughes, C. & Lampard, R. (2011) The methodological impact of feminism: A troubling issue for sociology? *Sociology*, 45:4, 570–86.
- Collins, P. H. (2000) *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge.
- Cook, J.A. and Fonow, M. (1990) Knowledge and women's interests: Issues of epistemology and methodology in feminist sociological research. *Sociological Inquiry*, 56:4, 2–29.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989) Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 140: 139–67.
- Cunliffe, A.L. (2010) Crafting qualitative research: Morgan and Smircich 30 years on. *Organizational Research Methods*, 4:14, 647–73.
- Davies, B. (2014) Reading anger in early childhood intra-actions: A diffractive analysis. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20:6, 734–41.
- Deutsch, N.L. (2004) Positionality and the pen: Reflections on the process of becoming a feminist researcher and writer. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10:6, 885–902.
- DeVault, M. (1999) *Liberating method: Feminism and social research*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Ely, R.J. & Meyerson, D.E. (2000) Advancing gender equity in organizations: The challenge and importance of maintaining a gender narrative. *Organization*, 7:4, 589–608.
- Fotaki, M., Metcalfe, B. & Harding, N. (2014) Writing materiality into management and organization studies through and with Luce Irigaray. *Human Relations*, 67:10, 1239–63.
- Foucault, M. (1994) *Theatrum Philosophicum*. In J. D. Faubion (Ed.) *Michel Foucault*.

- Aesthetics, method, and epistemology*. London: Allen Lane, the Penguin Press. 343–68.
- Foucault, M. (1979) *The history of sexuality*, vol. 1. London: Allen Lane.
- Foucault, M. (1986) *The history of sexuality*, vol. 2. Harmondsworth: Viking.
- Foucault, M. (1992) *The history of sexuality*, vol. 3. London: Penguin.
- Gill, R. (2011) The shadow in organizational ethnography: Moving beyond shadowing to spect-acting. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 6:2, 115–33.
- Gilmore, S. & Kenny, K. (2015) Work-worlds colliding: Self-reflexivity, power and emotion in organizational ethnography. *Human Relations* 68:1, 55–78.
- Glenn, C. (2004) *Unspoken. A rhetoric of silence*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Haraway, D.J. (1989) *Primate visions. Gender, race and nature in the world of modern science*. London: Routledge.
- Harding, N. and Ford, J. and Lee, H. (2017) 'Towards a performative theory of resistance: senior managers and revolting subject(ive)s.', *Organization studies*, 38:9, pp. 1209–1232.
- Harding, S. (1987) Introduction: Is there a feminist method? In S. Harding (Ed.), *Feminism and methodology*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, pp. 1–14.
- Harding, S. (Ed) (2004) *The feminist standpoint theory reader*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Hartsock, N. (1998). *The feminist standpoint revisited and other essays*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Haynes, K. (2011) Tensions in (re)presenting the self in reflexive autoethnographical research. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 6:2, 134–49.
- Healy, G., Bradley, H. & Forson, C. (2011) Intersectional sensibilities in analysing inequality regimes in public sector organizations. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 18:5, 467–87.
- Helin, J. (2015) Writing process after reading Bakhtin: From theorized plots to unfinalizable 'living' events. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 24:2, 174–85.
- Hester, J.D. (2004) Intersexes and the end of Gender. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 13:3, 215–25.
- Holvino, E. (2010) Intersections: The simultaneity of race, gender and class in organization studies. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 17:3, 248–77.
- Intemann, K. (2010) 25 years of feminist empiricism and standpoint theory: Where are we now? *Hypatia*, 25:4, 778–96.
- Karp, D. (1987) Professions beyond midlife: Some observations on older worker satisfaction in the 50- to 60-year decade. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 1:3, 209–23.
- Knights, D. & Kerfoot, D. (2004) Between representations and subjectivity: Gender binaries and the politics of organizational transformation. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 11:4, 430–54.
- Kondo, D. (1990) *Crafting selves: Power, gender, and discourses of identity in a Japanese workplace*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kuhn, A. (2002) *Family secrets: Acts of memory and imagination*. London: Verso.
- Lacan, J. (1998) *On feminine sexuality. The limits of love and knowledge. 1972–1973. Encore. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book XX*. J.A. Miller (Ed.), B. Fink (Trans.), New York: W.W. Norton.
- Letherby, G. (2003) *Feminist research in theory and practice*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Limerick, B. & O'Leary, J. (2006) Re-inventing or recycling? Examples of feminist qualitative research informing the management field. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 1:2, 98–112.
- Linstead, A. & Thomas, R. (2002) 'What do you want from me?' A poststructuralist feminist reading of middle managers' identities. *Culture and Organization*, 8:1, 1–21.
- Linstead, A. & Brewis, J. (2004) Beyond boundaries: Towards fluidity in theorising and practice. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 11:4, 335–62.
- Linstead, S. & Pullen, A. (2006) Gender as multiplicity: Desire, difference and dispersion. *Human Relations*, 59:9, 1287–310.
- Lykke, N. (2010) *Feminist studies. A guide to intersectional theory, methodology and writing*. London: Routledge.
- Martin, E. (1991) The egg and the sperm: How science has constructed a romance based on stereotypical male-female roles. *Signs*, 16:3, 485–501.

- Martin, P.Y. (2001) 'Mobilizing masculinities'. Women's experience of men at work. *Organization*, 8:4, 587–618.
- Mazzei, A. (2003) Inhabited silences: In pursuit of a muffled subtext. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(3): 355–68.
- Mazzei, L.A. (2014) Beyond an easy sense: A diffractive analysis. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20:6, 742–6.
- Milliken, F.J. and Wolfe Morrison, E. (2003) Speaking up, remaining silent: The dynamics of voice and silence in organizations. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(6): 1353–8.
- Mohanty, C. (1988) Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. *Feminist Review*, 30: 61–88.
- Muhr, S.L. (2011) Caught in the gendered machine: On the masculine and feminine in cyborg leadership. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 18:3, 337–57.
- Naples, N.A. (2003) *Feminism and method. Ethnography, discourse analysis and activist research*. Hove, UK: Psychology Press.
- Nicholson, L. (2013) Feminism in 'waves': Useful metaphor or not? In C.R. McCann & S.-K. Kim (Eds), *Feminist theory reader*. New York: Routledge, pp. 49–55.
- Oakley, A. (1981) Interviewing women: A contradiction in terms. *Doing Feminist Research*, 30:6, 1.
- Oakley, A. (2000) *Experiments in knowing: Gender and method in the social sciences*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Packer, M. (2011) *The science of qualitative research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Phillips, M., Pullen, A. & Rhodes, C. (2014) Writing organization as gendered practice: Interrupting the libidinal economy. *Organization Studies*, 35:3, 313–33.
- Pini, B. and Pease, B. (Eds) (2013) *Men, masculinities and methodologies*. Berlin: Springer.
- Plowman, D.A. & Smith, A.D. (2011) The gendering of organizational research methods. Evidence of gender patterns in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 6:1, 64–82.
- Puar, J. (2012) I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess. *Philosophia*, 2:1, 49–66.
- Reynolds, T. (2010) Re-thinking a black feminist standpoint. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 25:4, 591–606.
- Riley, D. (2005) *Impersonal passion. Language and affect*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Ringrose, J. & Renold, E. (2014) 'F**k rape!': Exploring affective intensities in a feminist research assemblage. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20:6, 772–80.
- Roets, G. & Goedgeluck, M. (2007) Daisies on the road. Tracing the political potential of our postmodernist, feminist approach to life story research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13:1, 85–112.
- Spivak, G. (1996) Subaltern studies. Deconstructing historiography. In D. Landry & G. McLean (Eds), *The Spivak reader*. London: Routledge.
- Stanley, L. & Wise, S. (1983) *Breaking out: Feminist consciousness and feminist research*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Stewart, K. (2007) *Ordinary affects*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Thomas, R. & Davies, A. (2005) What have the feminists done for us? Feminist theory and organizational resistance. *Organization*, 12:5, 711–40.
- Trethewey, A. (1997) Resistance, identity, and empowerment: A postmodern feminist analysis of clients in a human service organization. *Communications Monographs*, 64:4, 281–301.
- Tsalach, C. (2013) Between silence and speech: Autoethnography as an otherness-resisting practice. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 19:2, 71–80.
- Vickers, M.H. (2015) Stories, disability, and 'dirty' workers: Creative writing to go beyond too few words. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 24:1, 82–9.
- Walby, S., Armstrong, J. & Strid, S. (2012) Intersectionality: Multiple inequalities in social theory. *Sociology*, 46:2, 224–40.
- Womersley, G., Maw, A. & Swartz, S. (2011) The construction of shame in feminist reflexive practice and its manifestations in a research relationship. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17:9, 876–86.
- Woodhams, C., Lupton, B. & Cowling, M. (2013) The snowballing penalty effect: Multiple disadvantage and pay. *British Journal of Management*, 28:1, 63–77.

Indigenous Qualitative Research

Bettina Schneider and Bob Kayseas

INTRODUCTION

Former Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin responded to a question about the future of Aboriginal business for the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business by stating,

First of all, more and more Canadian businesses are beginning to understand that if you want to do business with Indigenous Canadians, you have to understand their worldview. If a Canadian business wants to do business in Korea, in China, or any other part of the world, they understand that they have to understand the people they're dealing with. They have to understand their worldview, they have to understand their concepts. ...For far too long, Canadian businesses have not understood this in terms of dealing with Indigenous Canada, and yet Indigenous Canada has a very deep and profound worldview (Gladu, 2016, p. 18).

This statement introduces a complex topic and it does so in a way that captures the core of what this chapter is about, which is Indigenous qualitative research as it pertains

to business. It is important to note that the authors believe many methods exist that work well with research involving Indigenous people, and we note some of these methods in the appropriate sections below. However, we also believe that this chapter should focus on 'why' there are distinct Indigenous research methods as well as 'how' those methods are to be implemented. This is an important discussion. Its importance can be highlighted with reference to the following quote from the *Canadian Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS):¹

Research involving Aboriginal peoples in Canada has been defined and carried out primarily by non-Aboriginal researchers. The approaches used have not generally reflected Aboriginal worldviews, and the research has not necessarily benefited Aboriginal peoples or communities. As a result, Aboriginal peoples continue to regard research, particularly research originating outside their communities, with a certain apprehension or mistrust. (Government of Canada, 2014, p. 105)

Researchers must understand the rationale for Indigenous research methods and must delve into their research with greater detail than simply acknowledging past injustices – their understanding needs to be at the level contemplated by the Former Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin. Martin believes that researchers need to understand the ‘world-view’ of their Indigenous research partners. The most challenging aspect of engaging in a process leading to active research involving Indigenous peoples is the self-awareness that is required. Stokes and Hall (2014) ask the following question in their book *Research Methods*: ‘to which particular philosophical and methodological approaches do you subscribe when you are in the process of developing new knowledge?’ (p. 96). Every researcher needs to ask him or herself this question before beginning their research project.

The core research questions we explore in this chapter are: (1) how can Indigenous business research be conducted without using only ‘Western academic constructs, methodologies and terminologies?’ (Mertens et al., 2012, p. 19); (2) how can Indigenous business research accurately communicate Indigenous peoples’ experiences and build on their conceptual and theoretical frameworks? and (3) how can Indigenous business research truly improve the quality of life of Indigenous people throughout the world? (Mertens et al., 2012). Our research on Indigenous qualitative research methodologies in business intends to seek out ‘locally relevant constructs, methods and theories derived from local experiences and Indigenous knowledge’ (Mertens et al., 2012, p. 19) that can contribute to an alternative to the Euro-Western paradigm within business, management, and other disciplinary areas.

This topic is particularly relevant at this moment in time, given the growing demand for the indigenization of teaching and research throughout Canadian higher education. This push to indigenize is partly driven by certain segments of society that

wish to address the gross inequities that exist amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. As Willie Ermine states, ‘the conditions that Indigenous peoples find themselves in are a reflection of the governance and legal structures imposed by the dominant society. Indeed, what the mirror can teach is that it is not really about the situation of Indigenous peoples in this country, but it is about the character and honor of a nation to have created such conditions of inequity’ (Ermine, 2007, p. 200). It is in fact this ‘Indigenous gaze’ now upon the West, which Ermine speaks of, that demands a profound change in the interactions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Ermine suggests that there is an ethical space, produced by contrasting worldviews, within which Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples can and must engage in dialogue if any form of reconciliation is to be achieved. This change must be achieved not only through the dialogue Ermine speaks of, but also through a more self-critical conversation amongst non-Indigenous peoples. In her critique of Len Findlay’s (2000) call to always indigenize, Elina Hill believes that non-Indigenous people need to engage in more self-critical work to decolonize and achieve better relationships with Indigenous peoples. Hill believes that Canadian universities’ call to ‘Indigenize’ might actually ‘help to avoid self-critical work toward decolonization on the part of the university’ (Hill, 2012). Hill references Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s groundbreaking book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (2012), in her critique. Smith, a Māori scholar and educator from New Zealand, not only provides a critique of ‘research’ in relation to Indigenous communities, but also creates an Indigenous research agenda that offers an alternative to the dominant paradigm. Hill’s understanding of Smith’s perspective on indigenization is that it is not only one of the many paths one can take toward decolonization (with decolonization being Smith’s main objective), but it also involves the immersion

of oneself in Indigenous knowledge systems, traditions, methodologies, and priorities. Hill further points out that:

while non-Indigenous people ought to take Indigenous thought seriously, they cannot easily take up Indigenous traditions or positions in order to forward their own projects. There needs to be keen awareness of how such a move might risk further exploiting Indigenous peoples and their knowledge. Because interactions between settlers and Indigenous peoples have long been fraught with imbalances of power, ethical non-Indigenous researchers engaging with Indigenous thought must do so in partnership with Indigenous peoples, and with recognition for Indigenous goals. (Hill, 2012)

This chapter attempts to explore how we as researchers in business, management, and other relevant disciplinary areas may respectfully engage with Indigenous methodologies in an effort to decolonize, indigenize, and meaningfully contribute to eradicating the inequities that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada states that apologies and reparations are not enough when it comes to reconciliation; real social, political, and economic change is needed (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). It is our hope that this chapter contributes to real change in Indigenous communities through the research that is undertaken by all who meaningfully engage with the ideas we share.

In the following chapter, we will first begin by exploring the role that decolonization plays in the undertaking of Indigenous research methodologies. We then review the four main elements of an Indigenous research paradigm: Indigenous ontology, Indigenous epistemology, Indigenous axiology, and Indigenous research methodology. We provide examples of Indigenous ontology, epistemology, axiology, and research methodology in practice. We explore distinct Indigenous qualitative research methods as well as qualitative research methods that work well with research involving Indigenous people.

We conclude with a discussion of the many opportunities and challenges that indigenization presents for researchers and universities.

DECOLONIZATION

Before we can begin to further complicate the call by academia to indigenize research, we must begin with a working understanding of what decolonization is, the role it plays in the formation of an Indigenous research paradigm, what an Indigenous research paradigm consists of, and the epistemological foundations upon which such a paradigm has been built. In *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Smith states ‘the term “research” is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, “research”, is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary’ (Smith, 2012, p. 1). Smith goes on to reference Edward Said (1978) and his Western discourse about the Other as she describes the ways knowledge about Indigenous peoples has been collected, categorized, and represented back to the West, and then represented back to the colonized through the Western ways of knowing and research (2012, p. 1). Smith goes on to say that Indigenous peoples have their own story to tell, ‘the history of Western research through the eyes of the colonized’ (1999, p. 2). One of the many significant contributions of Smith’s book is that it identifies research as not only a site of struggle between the West and Indigenous peoples, but also as a site of resistance. Smith’s book goes beyond deconstructing Western scholarship, i.e. a retelling of Western scholarship through Indigenous eyes, but it also attempts to resist and improve the current political and social conditions of Indigenous peoples through the exploration of research approaches and methodologies that ‘can be more respectful, ethical, sympathetic and useful’ (2012, p. 9). As Smith states, ‘To resist is to retrench in the margins,

retrieve “what we were and remake ourselves.” The past, our stories local and global, the present, our communities, cultures, languages and social practices – all may be spaces of marginalization, but they have also become spaces of resistance and hope’ (2012, p. 4). The purpose of this chapter is to examine how we, as business researchers, can not only decolonize and deconstruct our research methodologies, but also identify those spaces of resistance that will help to truly improve the conditions of Indigenous peoples. Wilson states that, ‘If research doesn’t change you as a person, then you haven’t done it right’ (2008, p. 135). Building on Wilson and Smith’s work, research shouldn’t only change you as a person, it should also always positively contribute to the communities with which you work. If research doesn’t meaningfully impact the research participants and contribute to the improvement of their current conditions, then you haven’t done it right.

According to Chilisa, decolonization is ‘a process of conducting research in such a way that the worldviews of those who have suffered a long history of oppression and marginalization are given space to communicate from their frames of reference’ (2012, p. 14). The process of decolonization is multifaceted. It requires researchers to ‘research back’ in an effort to examine how various disciplines have ‘described and theorized about the colonized Other’ and how such disciplines have silenced their voices and ‘refused to let the colonized Other name and know from their frame of reference’ (Chilisa, 2012, p. 14). Chilisa goes on to emphasize that the decolonization process must critically analyze dominant literatures in an effort to expose ‘the problematic influences of the Western eyes and how they legitimize “the positional superiority of Western knowledge”’ (Chilisa, 2012, p. 14). As Smith (2012) states, ‘decolonization, however, does not mean and has not meant a total rejection of all theory or research or Western knowledge. Rather, it is about centering our concerns and world views

and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspective’ (p. 41). More than anything, decolonization ‘must offer a language of possibility, a way out of colonialism’ (Smith 2012, p. 204), and provide Indigenous peoples with the opportunity to make plans, make strategic choices, and theorize solutions.

AN INDIGENOUS RESEARCH PARADIGM

It is important to explore the concept of ownership with regard to knowledge when discussing an Indigenous research paradigm. According to Wilson (2008), Hart (2010), and Chilisa (2012), within an Indigenous research paradigm, knowledge is not something achieved in isolation. Smith (2000) is critical of the commodification of knowledge and believes Maori cultural values and thinking see knowledge ‘as belonging to the whole group’, and that ‘individuals do not hold knowledge for themselves; they hold it for the benefit of the whole group’ (p. 218). An individual should not pursue knowledge for the sake of claiming that knowledge; it should be pursued and shared for all of creation. While we individually arrive at knowledge, knowledge is developed through the self in relation to other humans, other ideas, other environments (living and nonliving).

Wilson believes that four elements combine to make up a research paradigm: ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology. He encourages us to think of these four entities as interconnected and inseparable. From his perspective, an Indigenous research paradigm is about relationality – ‘ontology and epistemology are based on a process of relationships that form a mutual reality. The axiology and methodology are based upon maintaining accountability to these relationships. ...An Indigenous research paradigm is relational and maintains relational accountability’ (2008, p. 71). Wilson further explains

that an Indigenous research paradigm is founded on the belief that knowledge is relational; knowledge is shared with all of creation, i.e. research subjects, animals, plants, and the cosmos, and that we are accountable to the relations that we form through our research.

Wilson (2008), Chilisa (2012), and Hart (2010) all speak about the challenge of adapting the dominant system's research paradigms and tools because of the Western epistemological foundations upon which these paradigms have been built. However, each one of these authors successfully differentiates Indigenous ontology, Indigenous epistemology, Indigenous axiology, and Indigenous research methodologies from their Western counterparts. Wilson believes it is the uniqueness of these four elements that sets an Indigenous research paradigm apart from other research paradigms (2008). In order to truly understand what makes an Indigenous research paradigm unique, we will explore each of the above-mentioned elements in the following pages.

INDIGENOUS ONTOLOGY

Chilisa (2012) defines ontology as a body of knowledge that explores what it means to exist, and Wilson (2008) defines it as the nature of existence or reality. According to Wilson (2008), if 'reality is the relationship that one has with the truth' (p. 73), then an Indigenous ontology might have multiple realities. While Wilson (2008) acknowledges that the notion of multiple realities is similar to a constructivist paradigm, he points out that the difference between a constructivist ontology and an Indigenous ontology is that the truth is not external to an individual, but rather located in the relationships that one has. The concept of a *relational ontology* emphasizes that the relationships that one has with an object or idea are what is important and not the object or idea itself. Wilson

further expands on this idea 'to say that reality *is* relationships or sets of relationships. Thus, there is no one definite reality, but rather different sets of relationships that make up an Indigenous ontology. Therefore, reality is not an object, but a process of relationships, and an Indigenous ontology is actually the equivalent of an Indigenous epistemology' (2008, p. 73). Chilisa (2012) explains relational ontology as one's social reality in relation to the connections that human beings have with the living and non-living world. She refers to the *ubuntu* philosophy of the Bantu people of southern Africa as a way of explaining relational ontology. Chilisa (2012) discusses the translation of the *ubuntu* philosophy into English: 'I am we; I am because we are; we are because I am', or 'a person is because of others', which she asserts not only implies 'Communality, collectivity, social justice, human unity, and pluralism', but also a relational ontology (p. 21).

According to Hart (2010), spirituality and reciprocity are two key elements of an Indigenous ontology and are key in his Indigenous research paradigm. Hart cites Cajete (2000), Meyer (2008), and Rice (2005) as he explains the interconnectedness of the spiritual and physical worlds. Wilson (2008) defines spirituality as 'one's internal sense of connection to the universe' (p. 91), which Chilisa (2012) further explains may include 'one's personal connection to a higher being, or humanity, or the environment' (p. 114). Chilisa also acknowledges Indigenous peoples' connection to the environment/land when discussing spirituality. As Chilisa (2012) notes, 'construction of knowledge has to be done in a manner that builds and sustains relationships with the land/environment and is respectful of the environment. In this context, knowledge is held in connection with the land and the environment' (p. 114). Hart (2010) defines reciprocity as the belief 'that as we receive from others, we must also offer to others', and explains that 'reciprocity reflects the relational worldview and the

understanding that we must honor our relationships with other life' (p. 7).

Kayseas has explored the value of equal exchange and the principle of reciprocity through his research. Unlike the traditional Western model that views knowledge as an acquirable commodity, Indigenous traditions view information and knowledge transfer as a value of equal exchange or, as articulated by Greely (1996) and Michell (1999), 'as an entity that has spirit to which certain behaviors and protocols are accorded' (as cited in Cardamone & Rentschler, 2006, p. 32). Indigenous-focused research and knowledge transfer must value the principle of equal exchange and benefit the population as a whole if it is to be considered ethical and guided by what Gower (2003) refers to as the 'principle of reciprocity' (as cited in Cardamone & Rentschler, 2006, p. 11).

The principles of valued equal exchange and reciprocity encompass a number of vital research criteria: an emphasis on traditional social and cultural obligations for knowledge transfer which draw upon standards and customs under Indigenous law; a focus on 'deeper' research outcomes than merely reporting findings; the importance of Indigenous concepts of *community* before the *individual* with respect to research project negotiations and community participation; and the importance of a collective or community notion of consent and confidentiality (Ermine et al., 2004).

In accordance with Ermine et al. (2004) and Cardamone and Rentschler (2006), Kayseas and Moroz's (2014) research project, Natural Resource Partnerships and New Venture Creation in a First Nations Context, utilizes the above-mentioned principles to ensure that the outcomes have mutual and tangible benefits to Indigenous communities, that Indigenous communities retain authority over their knowledge, and that all obtained Indigenous knowledge is recognized and repaid through equal exchange and reciprocity. For example, case study communities are offered the services of the researchers/

business professors to assist them in capacity development initiatives that are mutually agreed upon. Project researchers, the co-PIs, collaborators, and research assistants may assist the community with research for a business plan, community-planning initiatives, or a market research study for a particular development project.

We will further address examples of Indigenous ontology in the section on Indigenous Research Methodology. While the above-mentioned section explains many aspects of an Indigenous ontology, we must begin to more deeply explore Indigenous epistemology in order to truly understand what it means to exist from an Indigenous frame of reference.

INDIGENOUS EPISTEMOLOGY

Indigenous knowledge cannot be easily categorized or defined. According to Battiste and Henderson (2000), Indigenous knowledge represents the 'cumulative body of knowledge and beliefs, handed down through generations of cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment' (p. 42). In his article, Indigenous Worldview, Knowledge and Research (2010), Hart references Maurial (1999) as he attempts to define Indigenous Knowledge (IK). Hart (2010) states that Indigenous Knowledge, according to Maurial, is 'the peoples' cognitive and wise legacy as a result of their interaction with nature in a common territory' and 'identifies three characteristics of Indigenous knowledge: local, holistic, and oral' (p. 62). Hart goes on to also reference De La Torre's (2004) definition of Indigenous knowledge, which Hart (2010) states is 'the established knowledge of Indigenous nations, their worldviews, and the customs and traditions that direct them' (p. 63).

In *Aboriginal Knowledge for Economic Development*, Newhouse (2013) asserts that Elders are the most ‘visible representation’ of Indigenous Knowledge in daily life because they ‘serve as sources of knowledge as well as reminders of a set of values and way of life and being’. IK is not just a set of knowledges, but a way of doing things, a way of living in the world and a way of being in the world (Newhouse, 2013, p. xxii). Newhouse looks to Cajete and Little Bear (1995), Castellano (2000), Battiste (2000), and Ermine (2005) as he identifies the following commonly accepted characteristics of IK:

- 1 a long, intimate relationship with a particular environment, based on long-term observations and testing of hypotheses through use and practice,
- 2 both reason and passion are intertwined and valued in decision-making,
- 3 practice, ceremony and instruction are how IK is transmitted,
- 4 IK has a spiritual foundation that emphasizes interconnectedness and (w)holism,²
- 5 an extended apprenticeship with Elders is generally how IK is acquired; learners are taught and tested through their observed behaviour,
- 6 IK is multidisciplinary in nature,
- 7 IK is both practical and ethical; it guides people how to live well within a particular landscape. (Newhouse, 2013, p. xxii–iii)

Newhouse (2013) examines the re-emergence of Indigenous Knowledge in the following reflections on his past work:

contemporary Aboriginal people in Canada desire to develop a modern Aboriginal society that is based in ideas both from the West and from their own cultural and intellectual traditions. This central desire has led to the necessary foregrounding of what we have come to call Indigenous knowledge (IK) or traditional knowledge (TK) or traditional environmental knowledge (TEK). It is expected that IK will serve as a foundational knowledge for the structures and processes of everyday life: governance, education, family, economy, health and culture. IK is seen as a way to recover from a more than century long attempt to replace every aspect of Aboriginal life with European-based thinking and values. Modern Aboriginal society did not reject knowledge from

the West, but brought it to the IK reconstruction effort with skepticism and a healthy dose of critical reflection. (p. xx)

According to Wilson (2008), knowledge is relational, meaning that it arises through the ways the human world, the spirit, and the environment (living and nonliving) interact with one another. Wilson (2008) states,

knowledge is shared with all of creation. It is not just interpersonal relationships, not just with the research subjects I may be working with, but it is a relationship with all of creation. It is with the cosmos, it is with the animals, with the plants, with the earth that we share this knowledge. It goes beyond this idea of individual knowledge to the concept of relational knowledge. It's not the realities in and of themselves that are important; it is the relationship that I share with reality. (p. 74)

Chilisa (2012) describes relational epistemologies as socially constructed by people who have a relationship and connection with one another as well as the living and nonliving environment (p. 116). Chilisa (2012) and Wilson (2008) describe how knowledge comes from many different sources: people's languages, histories, stories, observation of the environment, prayer, ceremony, song, dance, visions, and spiritual insights. Chilisa (2012) discusses the role Indigenous languages play in the advancement of ‘new knowledge, new concepts, new theories, and new rules, methods, and techniques in research’ (p. 57) as well as the important role language plays in the research process.

Wilson (2008) further points out the importance of understanding that ‘research and thinking need to be (and are) culturally based. Of course, all philosophy is based upon a culture, a time, a place. It is impossible for knowledge to be acultural’ (p. 91). Therefore, it is important to recognize the multiplicity of epistemologies and ontologies that contribute toward the creation of knowledge. It is critical to recognize the cultural origins of one's research epistemology and ontology. When discussing an Indigenous research paradigm, in addition to many of

the above-mentioned Indigenous values that inform it, Wilson emphasizes that the cultural values of egalitarianism and inclusiveness must be a part of the epistemological foundation of such a paradigm. The circle has been recognized as a common structure amongst many Indigenous communities because it supports inclusiveness, wholeness, egalitarianism (Wilson, 2008). When using an Indigenous research paradigm, the researcher cannot place himself or herself above anyone in his or her research circle. Research participants should be included every step of the way.

Elders, relationships, Indigenous languages, cultural values, stories, prayer, and ceremony are all sources of Indigenous Knowledge that we mention in the Indigenous research methodologies we share throughout this chapter. These sources of knowledge are examples of what makes an Indigenous epistemology unique and distinct from other epistemological foundations.

INDIGENOUS AXIOLOGY

Chilisa (2012) notes that ‘axiology refers to the analysis of values to better understand their meanings, characteristics, their origins, their purpose, their acceptance as true knowledge, and their influence on people’s daily experiences’ (p. 21). Wilson (2008) explains that Indigenous methodology demands that research is guided by respect, reciprocity, and responsibility, and that the researcher abides by these three Rs of Indigenous research and learning in order to help build relationships that have been established through the research process. Some of the questions pertinent to axiology and methodology that Wilson (2008, pp. 77–8) urges researchers to consider when working within an Indigenous research paradigm are:

- How do my methods help to build respectful relationships between the topic that I am studying and myself as a researcher (on multiple levels)?

- How do my methods help to build respectful relationships between myself of the other research participants?
- How can I relate respectfully to the other participants involved in this research so that together we can form a stronger relationship with the idea that we will share?
- What is my role as a researcher in this relationship, and what are my responsibilities?
- Am I being responsible in fulfilling my role and obligations to the other participants, to the topic and to all of my relations?
- What am I contributing or giving back to the relationship? Is the sharing, growth and learning that is taking place reciprocal?

Chilisa (2012) discusses relational axiology as one of the four elements of an Indigenous research paradigm; relational axiology is research that is guided by the four Rs: principles of relational accountability, respectful representation, reciprocal appropriation, and rights and regulations. We have already explored relational accountability above. Respectful representation refers to the researcher’s ability to listen, acknowledge, and ‘create a space for the voices and knowledge systems of the Other’ (Chilisa, 2012, p. 22). Reciprocal appropriation refers to the notion that all research is appropriation and should benefit both the researcher as well as the communities researched. Rights and regulations are ethical protocols that provide the research participants with ‘ownership of the research process and the knowledge produced’ (Chilisa, 2012, p. 22). While Wilson (2008) and Chilisa’s descriptions of Indigenous and relational axiology are similar to certain feminist and ethnographic research methodologies, the point of differentiation has everything to do with *context*. What we mean by this is that researchers need to take into consideration the history of research in Indigenous communities and the communities themselves. How do the above-mentioned questions posed by Wilson relate specifically to Indigenous communities and support the notion of relational accountability? One of the most important issues

regarding context is that the experiences of Indigenous research participants have been historically very negative. Researchers must understand this history and the lack of ownership Indigenous communities have had over the research process and knowledge produced before they can begin to fairly apply Wilson (2008) and Chilisa's (2012) interpretation of axiology to their research.

Within an Indigenous axiology, the principle of relational accountability promotes community-driven research. From this perspective, research must go beyond being community based; it must be driven by the needs and wants of the community. The Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network (UAKN) requires that community-driven and research embodies and promotes relational accountability in the following ways:

- a. Research is grounded in community priorities, and constructed or designed collaboratively between communities and researchers;
- b. Research conducted is respectful of Aboriginal people's languages, cultural protocols, values, lifecycles and gender(s);
- c. Research conducted is respectful of Aboriginal people's research approaches and protocols;
- d. Aboriginal peoples and organizations will be an active participant in the research process at the level of their choosing;
- e. Principles of USAI (Utility, Self-Voicing, Access and Inter-relationality), (OFIFC), and OCAPTM (Ownership, Control, Access and Possession), (FNIGC) will be looked to as useful and guiding references informing community driven research. (UAKN, 2015)

An example of community-driven research is the work by Schneider and Wenger (2014), which was conducted with the Newo Yotina Friendship Centre (NYFC) in 2013/14. The NYFC is an incorporated, non-profit, and broad-based collaborative community organization in Regina, Saskatchewan. The NYFC assists Aboriginal people within the Regina community to empower themselves and to pursue education, employment training, and advocacy in a comfortable environment

which allows them to heal, to grow, and to adjust to life in an urban setting, along with the challenges that this represents. The research project with the NYFC was funded by the Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network's Prairie Research Centre.³ As mentioned above, the UAKN requires that research is community-driven. When Schneider approached the NYFC in 2013, there was no pre-defined research topic. The research project that was eventually chosen was based on the NYFC's priorities and was designed collaboratively between the NYFC and Schneider. The objective of the NYFC's research project was to adapt the life skills and financial literacy curriculum in order to make it more relevant to the urban Aboriginal clientele at the Newo Yotina Friendship Centre (NYFC) and to determine the overall impact of this curriculum on NYFC's clientele. Prior to this research project, the NYFC had experience in delivering financial literacy curriculum. According to the NYFC, during the review of the original financial literacy curriculum, while participants showed tremendous growth in their understanding of various topics that were reviewed, many barriers that interfered with attendance, consistency, and the overall attainment and application of information were identified, indicating the need for a different approach to delivering this type of curriculum. The NYFC noted that many of the concepts in the curriculum were designed from a mainstream perspective and asserted the need to develop a curriculum that incorporated an Aboriginal worldview and a culturally sensitive approach, as well as the inclusion of a relevant life skills curriculum, in order to eliminate barriers and to provide a greater opportunity for a holistic, multi-pronged, sustainable program for urban Aboriginal peoples. An Indigenous axiology ensures that the values of Indigenous communities guide the research process and methodologies undertaken.

INDIGENOUS RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Stokes and Wall (2014) ask a fundamental question that needs to be addressed before any of us embark on our research projects: ‘to which particular philosophical and methodological approaches do you subscribe when you are in the process of developing new knowledge?’ (p. 96). The methodological approaches we choose are, of course, guided by our epistemological and ontological foundations. Epistemology reflects the various ways knowledge is made or developed. The epistemology one adheres to reveals the assumptions and values that the researcher holds about the world. Before we can choose a specific methodological path, each one of us needs to discover ‘our own approach, attitudes, beliefs and assumptions in relation to how much of the wider world operates and functions particularly in relation to ideas such as subjectivity versus objectivity and realism versus relativism’ (Stokes and Wall, 2014, p. 96). The choice of research philosophy and methodology very much reflects one’s perspective on life. The research philosophy we choose reflects the values and beliefs that guide our philosophical thinking, while the research methodology ‘will operate in a given system of philosophical thinking’ (Stokes and Wall, 2014, p. 88).

While certain qualitative research methodologies align well with Indigenous research methodologies, many do not. Chilisa (2012) provides an overview of some of the limitations of dominant research methodologies:

- 1 The tendency to ignore the role of imperialism, colonization, and globalization in the construction of knowledge
- 2 Academic imperialism – the tendency to denigrate, dismiss, and attempt to quash alternative theories, perspectives, or methodologies
- 3 Methodological imperialism – a tendency to build a collection of methods, techniques, and rules that valorize the dominant culture

- 4 The dominance of Euro-Western languages in the construction of knowledge
- 5 The archives of literature that disseminate theories and knowledge that are unfavorable to former colonized societies and historically oppressed groups. (p. 117)

An Indigenous research methodology ensures that researched knowledge ‘will be kept “in context” with cultural protocols’ (University of Calgary, 2015), as well as being meaningful and taking into consideration the well-being (present and future) of the communities studied. Another key characteristic of an Indigenous research methodology is the collective. As explained by Maggie Kovach (2009), there is a sense of commitment to the people in many Indigenous societies. Inherent in this commitment to the people is the understanding of the reciprocity of life and accountability to one another. Wilson (2008) points out that as researchers, ‘you are recognized by your deeds within the Indigenous world. Not by what you say on paper: what you have done’ (p. 91). Therefore, an Indigenous research methodology emphasizes actions over words as well as practicality, which assumes that the knowledge one gains through research will be utilized in practical ways – ways that benefit the research participants. Hart (2010) emphasizes this practicality of research by quoting Kovach’s statement, ‘one seeks knowledge because one is prepared to use it’ (p. 9).

We asked First Nations University of Canada’s business professor, Richard Missens, to share the Indigenous research methodology he has been using throughout his dissertation. Reflecting on his dissertation experience, Missens states,

First Nations’ people have always had a veneration of age and the accumulated wisdom that the elders have learned throughout a lifetime. These cultures view the elders as the knowledge keepers and the teachers within their societies. When we are seeking understanding, their teachings are available to us in the time of our lives when we need them with as much as a simple request. However, there are a set of principles and doctrines

that guide learners of First Nations' knowledge. Here are some examples:

- Knowledge is collectively owned, shared and held (multi-agent system)
- Knowledge is cumulative (learnt through increasing or enlarging by successive addition)
- Knowledge requires a commitment from the learner
- Humility is vital to understanding
- Knowledge must be sought (i.e., you have to seek it, it is not forced on you)
- All knowledge is sacred and spiritual and must be treated as such. (Richard Missens, personal communication, May 25, 2016)

Missens' first step in his dissertation research was to identify elders. Missens states, 'In First Nation societies, as with any other, there are individuals who have expertise and experience in specific areas. In societies that believe in multi-intelligence, where individuals are blessed with "gifts", including knowledge, learners must seek out those knowledge keepers who hold the type of knowledge that you are seeking' (Richard Missens, personal communication, May 25, 2016). Missens asked the Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Center (SICC)⁴ for assistance. As he points out, this cultural institution has a deep commitment to the promotion and preservation of IK and has developed extensive relationships with the First Nations elders across Saskatchewan.

Missens' second step in his dissertation research involved protocol. As he states, 'In order to respect the First Nation doctrine of learning, I had to present tobacco to the elders and ask them for their understanding and guidance. They were invited to a focus group meeting where we would ask them to share their knowledge. There were two primary focus groups and three individual follow-up meetings after that' (Missens, personal communication, May 25, 2016).

Missens' third step involved ceremony. Missens states, 'Before the focus groups, the elders had asked that a smudge ceremony and prayer be conducted prior to starting. The

smudge is a purifying ceremony that cleanses our minds and spirits in preparation for the acceptance of new knowledge – it opens our minds. The prayers asked the Creator and our ancestors to help us. The prayers asked 1) that the learner (Missens) is successful in attaining the understanding that he is seeking, 2) that what he learns will be used for the good of the people, 3) the elders prayed that what they share is truthful and accurate, and 4) giving thanks for this opportunity to work together' (Missens, personal communication, May 25, 2016).

Missens' research methodology certainly captures the key elements of Indigenous ontology as described above by Hart: spirituality and reciprocity. Spirituality is described by Missens in the third step of his dissertation research on ceremony. Missens has also demonstrated reciprocity by giving back to First Nations communities through his dissertation research. Like Kayseas, Missens also offers his services to assist the communities he works with in capacity development initiatives that are mutually agreed upon. He has delivered numerous workshops to First Nations communities on business planning and entrepreneurship as part of his dissertation work. Many First Nations communities and individuals have benefitted from these workshops, which was part of the guidance Missens received from the Elders – to give back to the individuals and communities he sought guidance from.

INDIGENOUS QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

Kovach (2009) believes that 'Indigenous methodologies and qualitative research at best form an insider/outsider relationship' (p. 31). What is meant by this insider/outsider relationship is that while Indigenous methodologies share interrelated characteristics with certain qualitative approaches,

there are two fundamental areas that are unique to Indigenous research methodologies. According to Kovach (2009), 'Indigenous knowledges have a fluidity and motion that is manifested in the distinctive structure of tribal languages. They resist the culturally imbued constructs of the English language, and from this perspective alone Western research and Indigenous inquiry can walk together only so far' (p. 30). Indigenous epistemologies represent the other area that exists outside of Western research methodologies; they are very different from Western epistemologies, as we explored in the beginning of this chapter. The importance of these insights by Kovach is that qualitative research methodologies and Indigenous methodologies can occupy a similar methodological space, and within this space, both comparable and different methods can be applied. However, as mentioned by Kovach above, when it comes to language and worldview, non-Indigenous researchers *can only walk so far*. This certainly does not mean that non-Indigenous researchers cannot meaningfully participate in Indigenous research. However, such research must be done *with Indigenous peoples* in order to truly understand the importance of Indigenous languages, worldview, ontology, epistemology, axiology, and research methodology in the research process. For example, with regard to language, Wilson (2008) notes that Aboriginal Australians will refer to other Indigenous people as 'cousin', 'brother', or 'auntie', demonstrating 'the relationship with something (a person, object or idea) is more important than the thing itself' (p. 73). In Cree, Wilson (2008) points out that '*Nookoom*' means 'my grandmother' and '*Kookoom*' means 'your grandmother'; however, 'there is no word for "grandmother" in Cree. ... "You can't be a grandmother without being attached to something"' (p. 73). In both examples, understanding the language deepens one's understanding of Indigenous worldview, epistemology, and relationships. Without this understanding,

non-Indigenous researchers can only walk so far. Additionally, there are a myriad of issues that will impact the authenticity and value of the research and the ability of non-Indigenous researchers to undertake projects with Indigenous populations as the focus. One such issue is related to the questions being asked by the researcher and thus the depth of understanding required. For example, a researcher examining strategic alliances between Indigenous communities and industry partners may not delve into social and, especially, cultural variables within the community and thus the depth of understanding could conceivably be rather shallow. However, if a researcher is studying why Indigenous people choose to pursue collective interests over individual pursuits when engaging in entrepreneurship, he or she may need to explore the Indigenous groups' worldview, values, and even the language. This second example illustrates the potential range of understanding required of non-Indigenous researchers. This is not to say that a non-Indigenous researcher cannot be successful at such research; however, a certain depth of understanding is required. Furthermore, non-Indigenous researchers must always be working to decolonize themselves and their disciplines in order to genuinely participate in Indigenous research. In the following section, we will explore Indigenous research methods that exist both 'inside' and 'outside' of traditional qualitative research methodologies.

As Brayboy states, 'Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being' (Brayboy, 2006). When it comes to story-gathering methods, such as the case method, narrative research, and certain ethnographic approaches, it is important that the researcher is a good listener and is comfortable with how the story is being shared; the researcher should not interrupt or else he or she risks not only disrespecting the research participant, but also impeding information from being shared

that could be quite relevant to the research. Those trained in Western research methodologies must look beyond written stories and texts as the only legitimate ways of knowing. Indigenous methodologies value the oral tradition as well as other storytelling methods such as song, dance, proverbs, and metaphors that have often been dismissed by academia as legitimate ways of knowing. As Chilisa (2012) notes, language, oral literature, and storytelling 'can provide new insights into other ways of theorizing about methodologies in social science research' (p. 156) as well as provide an avenue of dialogue with research participants about issues of concern. Indigenous case studies are examples of research methodologies that share inter-related characteristics with the case method. While the case method approach is used in constructing the case, the Indigenous worldview and research methods are incorporated into the development of the case and the methodology used. There are an increasing number of Indigenous case studies being developed. Cape Breton University, located in Sydney, Nova Scotia, created the Purdy Crawford Chair in Aboriginal Business Studies in order to promote interest among Canada's Aboriginal people in business and to undertake research that will create post-secondary resources, such as case studies, that can be used to indigenize the business curriculum in universities across Canada. The Purdy Crawford Chair has developed 48 case studies available in their Case Studies in Aboriginal Business Series. The First Nations University of Canada's School of Business and Public Administration has developed a number of Indigenous case studies and hopes to generate many more in the future.

With regard to the interview method, Kovach (2009) states, 'Highly structured interviews are not congruent with accessing knowledges that imbue both the fluidity and regulation of the storyteller's role within oral tradition, or that respond to the relational nature of Indigenous research' (p. 123). Indigenous methodologies do not

promote placing restrictions on a research participant's narrative, but rather encourage an open-ended structure. If we refer to certain Indigenous axiologies that were mentioned earlier in the chapter, respect, reciprocity, and egalitarianism are critical to incorporate into the interview process. Research participants must be treated with the utmost respect, must not feel as though a power differential is present between themselves and the researcher(s), and should also benefit from the research process. Too often, 'researchers conduct interviews as privileged elites and knowers who are operating with Western models of thought and conducting interviews within frameworks of Othering ideologies supported by deficit theories and literature that construct the researched as the problem' (Chilisa, 2012, p. 223). Furthermore, the language used is also guided by Western academic disciplinary vocabulary, terms, concepts, and categories of analysis that could certainly limit relational ways of knowing that are meant to 'communicate equality among participants' (Chilisa, 2012, p. 220). Indigenous interview methods demand that the researcher uses IK 'to guide interview question structures, types of questions asked, and data analysis procedures' (Chilisa, 2012, p. 223).

One of the disadvantages of some Western-based focus groups is that they do not always allow all members to be equally heard. Dominant voices within the groups can often restrict others from freely participating. While Nominal Group Technique and the Delphi Method are Western-based methods that strive to provide all participants with a voice when it comes to identifying problems, generating solutions, and making decisions, these approaches are still quite different from the talking circle and/or research-sharing circle approach within Indigenous groups. The talking circle and/or research-sharing circle approach allows everyone a chance to speak uninterrupted. It is common practice to have each speaker hold a sacred object – e.g. a stone, a feather – while

he or she is speaking and to pass it along to the next speaker when he or she is done (Chilisa, 2012). Kovach (2009) notes that there is a general set of protocols that guide research-sharing circles in Indigenous settings, such as the expectation that they are led by an Elder or cultural leader, that food is provided to the group and that all participants are properly acknowledged for their contributions. There is very much a spiritual element incorporated into the talking circle and/or research-sharing circle. As Kovach (2009) states, the 'research-sharing circle is a method to engender story. It is meant to provide space, time, and an environment for participants to share their story in a manner that they can direct' (p. 124).

With regard to open-ended questionnaires, researchers must incorporate IK systems into their design and make them reflective of the needs and experiences of the research participants and their communities. For example, are the questions and terminologies used throughout questionnaires constructed in a way that makes the questions fully relevant to the research participants given their knowledge systems, languages, and experiences? Are the questions seeking out knowledge that the research participants and communities deem as useful and beneficial? Do the questionnaires legitimize the knowledge and theory of the research participants and their communities or that of the researcher(s) (Chilisa, 2012)? Chilisa (2012, p. 230) provides the following questions to consider when Indigenous research participants are actually involved as co-researchers, questions which promote one type of participatory action research approach: the participant as co-researcher:

- 1 How are the research questions produced?
- 2 Whose research questions are they?
- 3 Do the research questions energize the researched to engage in a dialogue about their material world?
- 4 What methods and theory are used to accurately generate and record marginalized voices, as well as indigenous and local knowledge pre-

dominantly excluded through Euro-Western conventional methodologies?

- 5 With what and with whose theories are research questions and analysis of data conceptualized?

Participatory action research aligns well with Indigenous research methodologies. According to Bergold and Thomas (2012), participatory research methods fully engage research participants in the research process *since it is their* 'life-world and meaningful actions' under examination. Participatory research methods also emphasize treating research participants and communities not as 'objects of research, but rather as co-researchers and knowing subjects with the same rights as the professional researchers' (Bergold and Thomas, 2012). Transformative participatory action research methods must also be considered when discussing Indigenous research methods, since there are some important commonalities. Essentially, transformative participatory action research emphasizes 'active engagement and political action' (Chilisa, 2012, p. 235) by both researcher and researched in the pursuit of personal and social transformation. Examples of participatory action research approaches that align well with Indigenous research methodologies and maximize community involvement are outlined by Chilisa (2012):

- 1 Selecting a shared community problem and planning for the action research
- 2 Culturally sensitive and context-relevant gathering of information guided by group reflection
- 3 Continuous collection of data through field-work
- 4 Community-informed analyzing and interpretation of data
- 5 Participatory monitoring and evaluation. (p. 255)

Furthermore, participatory action research methods often employ appreciative-inquiry approaches that encourage both the researcher and research participants to look at participants' strengths and the strengths of their

communities instead of approaching the research process from a problem-based, deficit position that reinforces hopelessness and a lack of agency amongst research participants (Chilisa, 2012). Participatory action research certainly represents the insider space Kovach refers to when discussing qualitative research methodologies that overlap with Indigenous methodologies in an effort to empower and socially transform research participants and their communities.

INDIGENIZING THE ACADEMY

Indigenization is a process that involves a critique and resistance to Euro-Western methodological imperialism and hegemony as well as a call for the adapting of conventional methodologies by including perspectives and methods that draw from Indigenous knowledges, languages, metaphors, worldviews, experiences, and philosophies of former colonized, historically oppressed, and marginalized social groups (Chilisa, 2012, p. 101).

There are many opportunities and challenges regarding indigenization in the academic sphere. On October 15, 2015, Dr. Lynn Wells, First Nation University's Vice-President Academic, at the time attended Marie Battiste's presentation, 'Indigenization and the Academy's Responses and Responsibilities', at the National Vice-President's Academic Council (NATVAC) at Dalhousie University, located in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Dr. Wells shared her notes on the presentation with many of us at First Nation University. According to Wells, Battiste shared that indigenization has become an increasingly competitive area amongst universities in Canada; many universities are competing over funds and the number of Aboriginal people they can bring into their institutions. However, during the conference, Battiste encouraged institutions to learn from and share with one another when it come to indigenization. She noted that more students do not necessarily lead to fundamental changes

in how the university is structured, how knowledge and values are prioritized, how teaching is approached, and how research is conducted (L. Wells, personal communication, October 15, 2015). With regard to research, indigenization requires far more from us as researchers than simply choosing to work with Indigenous partners, research respondents, and communities. It requires us to decolonize ourselves and our disciplines as well as to immerse ourselves in Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, axiologies, and research methodologies if we are going to make fundamental changes to the way research is conducted. This is certainly one of the opportunities that indigenization offers researchers and academia.

One of the key challenges indigenization must contend with is the intellectual imperialism and overall dismissiveness amongst many Western academic institutions and academics when it comes to IK. Chilisa (2012) expands on this notion in the following: 'For colonized, historically oppressed, and marginalized groups, intellectual imperialism speaks to the tendency to exclude and dismiss as irrelevant knowledge embedded in the cultural experiences of the people and the tendency to appropriate Indigenous knowledge systems in these societies without acknowledging copyrights of the producers of this knowledge' (p. 55). One of the fundamental challenges of the Western academy is how to restructure itself so that it is truly a multiplicity of epistemologies in relation to one another and not simply built upon Eurocentric knowledge systems at its core, whilst non-European epistemologies exist and exert limited influence at the margins. IK and research methodologies often challenge dominant paradigms that locate Eurocentric ways of knowing as the norm. As Hill states,

To continue to ignore the effects of research, or to pretend that they are someone else's concern, is to continue colonizing from the site of the university. Indeed, the absence or obfuscation of Indigenous perspectives from Canadian knowledge systems over the last few centuries has distorted realities

for all, and has led to increasingly complex ethical, legal, and practical dilemmas. (Hill, 2012)

While indigenization provides the opportunity for researchers and universities to decolonize and to meaningfully contribute to eradicating the inequities that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, the structure of the academy and the intellectual imperialism that very much still exists represent significant barriers.

CONCLUSION

The system within academic structures throughout the world regarding research, academic performance, and professional advancement has the potential to negatively impact the quality and value of research within and for Indigenous communities. The standards that could be codified from all the works referenced above regarding Indigenous research are substantial and far-reaching. For example, decolonizing research, as described by Chilisa (2012), suggests that researchers need to create the opportunity for Indigenous research participants to ‘communicate from their frames of reference’ (p. 14). As mentioned earlier, Chilisa (2012) offers a number of suggested approaches to accomplishing this challenging task: ‘selecting a shared community problem and planning for the action research; culturally sensitive and context-relevant gathering of information guided by group reflection; continuous collection of data through fieldwork; community-informed analyzing and interpretation of data; participatory monitoring and evaluation’ (p. 255). The processes to engage the community are complex and involve a respectful, close relationship between the researcher and the research participants.

Additionally, we note concerns about ownership of knowledge created through the research process. We state earlier in the chapter that knowledge is often seen

as something to be obtained, individually owned, and commodified. It is argued that one of the essential components of an Indigenous research paradigm is that knowledge cannot be owned. Furthermore, Indigenous peoples should benefit from the knowledge they are sharing through the research process and in fact it should be recognized that the knowledge so shared does not transfer ownership. Newhouse (2013) offers a list of important research processes that should be present within projects involving Indigenous peoples. He suggests that research must be grounded in community priorities and constructed or designed collaboratively between communities and researchers. Kovach (2009) describes the sense of commitment to the people that exists within many Indigenous societies. This shared sense of mutual commitment manifests itself through such life principles as reciprocity of life and accountability to one another. Therefore, when one seeks to engage within such communities, they are assuming responsibilities of giving back and being accountable for the participation they seek. Researchers must agree that the knowledge one gains through research will be utilized in practical ways – ways that benefit the research participants.

The question thus arises, how does the Euro-Western research paradigm, operationalized within the framework of the Canadian and global academic system, reconcile with the substantial and far-reaching requirements of the Indigenous research paradigm? A number of suggestions were made within the context of Indigenizing qualitative research methods noted above. However, one of the challenges that remains is that these suggested approaches must yet occur within a system that is guided by the globally accepted tenet, ‘publish or perish’. Publish or perish. Those words are heard throughout university campuses throughout the world. Kilonzo and Magak (2013) describe the impact of the:

relentless pressure to publish, quickly and continually, [that] dictates the sustenance of one's academic career. Scholars who do not meet the demands of this rigorous central rule in academia, regardless of the importance of whatever else they are doing in the field, are routinely marginalized by both peers and institutions. It is arguable that a significant percentage of the substandard work submitted for academic publishing is attributable to this professional pressure. This pressure is a global phenomenon.... (p. 28)

The publish or perish phenomenon, along with the new push amongst universities and colleges throughout Canada to indigenize, has led many researchers to pursue research projects that have an Indigenous component. However, if the intention of these research projects is more for individual gain than for the benefit of Indigenous communities, then this is in opposition to everything we have discussed in this chapter.

Many people are involved in research projects involving Indigenous populations and there are likely many great examples of success. However, as noted previously, research within many Indigenous communities still carries negative connotations. The highest order of codified research ethics in Canada recognizes this in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*, which is highly consistent with other national and international ethics policies. The challenges that exist for business researchers seeking to engage in knowledge development within Indigenous communities are considerable. However, doing it right will lead to the creation of new relationships and potentially new, positive outcomes for communities and people that deserve so much more than the academic community has traditionally provided. If research is approached as ceremony, then stronger relationships, a raised level of consciousness, and new insights about the world around us are only some of the many benefits both researchers and research participants will receive (Wilson, 2008).

Notes

- 1 The Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS or the Policy) is a joint policy by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), Canada's three federal research agencies. It expresses the agencies' commitment to ethical research involving humans and is also 'a framework that harmonizes with other national and international ethics policies' (Government of Canada, 2014, p. 11).
- 2 'Interconnectedness is the idea that all things are connected in some fashion and that these connections can be made clear and examined. Holism is the idea that individual parts cannot be discussed without seeing how they fit together in a coherent manner' (Newhouse, 2013, p. xxiii).
- 3 <http://uakn.org/research-centre/prairie-research-centre/>
- 4 The Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre's mission statement is to 'Protect, preserve and promote cultures and languages of the First Nations Peoples of Saskatchewan' (SICC, 2016). The SICC was first established by the Federation of Sovereign Indian Nations (FSIN) in 1972 as the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre and 'was the first First Nations controlled educational institution serving at the provincial level' (SICC, 2016).

REFERENCES

- Battiste, M. (2000). Maintaining Aboriginal Identity, Language, and Culture in Modern Society. In Marie Battiste (ed.), *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Battiste, M. & Henderson, J. S. Y. (2000). *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage: A Global Challenge*. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada: Purich Publishing.
- Bergold, Jan & Stefan Thomas. (2012). Participatory Research Methods: A Methodological Approach in Motion. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 13(1), Art. 30. Retrieved from: www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1801/3335

- Brayboy, B. (2006). Toward a Tribal Critical Race Theory in Education. *The Urban Review*, 37(5): 425–46.
- Cajete, G. (2000). *Native Science: Nature Laws of Interdependence*. Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishing.
- Cajete, G. & Little Bear, L. (1995). *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence*. Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishing.
- Cardamone, M. & Rentschler, R. (2006) Intercultural Indigenous Research Philosophy (HRP) – an ethical approach to research in the Indigenous cultural sector, in ICCPR 2006: 4th International Conference on Cultural Policy Research Proceedings, Vienna: Routledge.
- Castellano, M. B. (2000). Updating Aboriginal Traditions of Knowledge. In G. J. S. Dei, B. L. Hall, & D. G. Rosenberg (Eds.), *Indigenous Knowledges in Global Contexts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Chilisa, B. (2012). *Indigenous Research Methodologies*. London: SAGE Publication.
- De La Torre, J. (2004). In the Trenches: A Critical Look at the Isolation of American Indian Political Practices in the Nonempirical Social Science of Political Science. In D. A. Mihesuah & A. C. Wilson (Eds.), *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Transforming Communities* (pp. 174–90). Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
- Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S. & Smith, L. T. (2008). *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Ermine, W. (2005). *Kwayask itôtamowin: Indigenous Research Ethics*. Ottawa: Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre.
- Ermine, W. (2007). The Ethical Space of Engagement. *Indigenous Law Journal*, 6(1). Retrieved from: www.sfu.ca/iirp/documents/Ermine%202007.pdf.
- Ermine, Willie, Sinclair, Raven & Jeffery, Bonnie. (2004). *The Ethics of Research Involving Indigenous Peoples: Report of the Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre to the Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics*. Retrieved from: <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/uregina/detail.action?docID=10368121>.
- Findlay, Len. (2000). Always Indigenize!: The Radical Humanities in the Postcolonial Canadian University. *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 31 (1–2): 306–26.
- Gladu, J. P. (January 2016). One on One with Paul Martin. *The Aboriginal Business Report: A Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business Publication*. Retrieved from: <http://mediaedge.imirus.com/Mpowered/book/vabor15/i2/p1>
- Government of Canada. (2014). Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans: *Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada*. Retrieved from: www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/introduction/
- Greely, H. (1996). Genes, Patents, and Indigenous Peoples: Biomedical Research and Indigenous Peoples' Rights. *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, 20(2): 54–7.
- Hart, M. A. (2010). Indigenous Worldviews, Knowledge, and Research: The Development of an Indigenous Research Paradigm. *Journal of Indigenous Voices in Social Work*, 1(1): 1–16.
- Hill, Elina. (2012). A Critique of the Call to 'Always Indigenize!' *Peninsula: A Journal of Relational Politics*. Retrieved from: <http://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/peninsula/article/view/11513/3212>
- Kayseas, B. and Moroz, P. (2014). *Natural Resource Partnerships and New Venture Creation in a First Nations Context*. Unpublished research proposal, First Nations University of Canada and the University of Regina.
- Kilonzo, Susan M. & Magak, Kitche. (2013). Publish or Perish. *International Journal of Sociology*, 43(1): 27–42.
- Kovach, M. (2009). *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Maurial, M. (1999). Indigenous Knowledge and Schooling: A Continuum between Conflict and Dialogue. In L. M. Semali & J. L. Kincheloe (Eds.), *What is Indigenous Knowledge: Voices from the Academy* (pp. 59–77). New York: Falmer Press.
- Mertens, D. M., Cram, F. & Chilisa, B. (2012). *Indigenous Pathways into Social Research:*

- Voices of a NEW GENERATION*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Meyer, M. A. (2008). Indigenous and Authentic. In N. K. Denzin, Y. S. Lincoln, & L. T. Smith (Eds.), *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies* (pp. 217–32). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Newhouse, David. (2013). Introduction: How to Live on the Back of a Turtle. In David Newhouse, Jeff Orr & the Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Development Integrated Research Program, *Aboriginal Knowledge for Economic Development* (pp. x–xxiii). Nova Scotia, Canada: Fernwood Publishing Company.
- Rice, B. (2005). *Seeing the World with Aboriginal Eyes: A Four Dimensional Perspective on Human and Non-human Values, Cultures and Relationships on Turtle Island*. Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada: Aboriginal Issues Press.
- Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. London: Vintage Books.
- Schneider, B. & Wenger, K. (2014). *Aboriginal Life Skills and Financial Literacy Curriculum Development and Education*. Retrieved from: <http://uakn.org/research-project/aboriginal-life-skills-and-financial-literacy-curriculum-and-education-through-the-newo-yotina-friendship-centre-nyfc/>
- SICC (Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre). (2016). *About Us*. Retrieved from: www.sicc.sk.ca/about_us.html.
- Smith, G. (2000). Protecting and Respecting Indigenous Knowledge. In M. Battiste (Ed.), *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (pp. 209–24). Vancouver, Canada: UBC Press.
- Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London; New York: Zed Books.
- Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (2nd ed.). London; New York: Zed Books.
- Stokes, P. & Wall, T. (2014). *Research Methods*. London; New York: Macmillan Education/ Palgrave.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Retrieved from: www.trc.ca.
- University of Calgary. (2015). *Indigenous Methodologies*. Retrieved from: www.ucalgary.ca/indigenous/research/methodologies
- Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network. (2015). *Guiding Ethical Principles*. Ottawa: UAKN. Retrieved from:
- Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Black Point, NS: Fernwood Publishing Company.

An Introduction to Constructionism for Qualitative Researchers in Business and Management¹

Gina Grandy

INTRODUCTION

We are all constructionists if we believe that the mind is active in the construction of knowledge. (Schwandt, 2000, p. 189)

What really exists is not things but things in the making. (James, 1909/1996, p. 263, in Tsoukas & Chia, 2002, p. 567)

There are a number of variations and interpretations of constructionism that influence the work of qualitative researchers. As noted by Gubrium & Holstein (2008) in their *Handbook of Constructionist Research*, ‘constructionism now belongs to everyone and to no one – a highly variegated mosaic of itself’ (p. 4). My intent with this chapter is not to present an exhaustive review of constructionism for qualitative researchers in organization studies – there are various sources already available which do this well (see for example, Cunliffe, 2008; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Samra-Fredericks, 2008). Rather, my desire here is to offer a particular reading of

constructionism that draws from my own lived experiences – deriving from my own questions, challenges, reflections and development – to assist those relatively new to constructionism. In line with a social constructionist approach, I am writing myself into the chapter and this means what is to follow is both enriched and limited by my own interpretations, experiences and preferences.

It is difficult to speak of the roots of constructionism because the influences and streams of thinking are so diverse. I suggest it might be better to think of it as a web of influences, comprised of interconnected thinkers, theories, perspectives, research strategies and methods. For example, influential thinkers range from Weber, Durkheim, Marx, Gergen, Goffman, Berger and Luckmann, to Shotter, and related theories range from symbolic interactionism and sense-making to postmodernism. Constructionism is suited to a diverse range of research methodologies (e.g. action research, ethnography, grounded theory) and methods (e.g. observation, interviews, narratives). Constructionism

underpins studies in leadership (see Fairhurst & Grant, 2010, for a conceptual overview, or Grandy & Šliwa, 2015, for a qualitative empirical study), identity (Alvesson, 2010; Grandy, 2008; Thomas & Linstead, 2002), gender (Mavin & Grandy, 2016a, 2016b), entrepreneurship (Downing, 2005; Fletcher, 2006; Refai et al., 2015), management learning (e.g. Corlett, 2013; Larsen & Ø Madsen, 2016; Ramsey, 2013) and strategy (Grand et al., 2015; Mir & Watson, 2000), among others. Given that this chapter is in many ways one distinct to my experiences of constructionism, it seems fitting to first provide the reader with an overview of the key aspects of constructionism that inform my work as a qualitative researcher in business and management.

Following Lincoln & Guba (2000), I understand constructionism to be a *perspective* or *research paradigm* whereby individuals continually construct and negotiate meanings to make sense of experiences. Constructionism is *dialectical*; marked by tensions and complexities because of the opposing yet inseparable nature of subjective and objective realities,² static and processual realities, subjective and objective knowing, and self in-relation-to-others. It envelops *relativism* in the sense that local and specific multiple realities exist, but also *realism* in that political, cultural, social and historical contexts through which such realities are constructed reproduce material effects. Meaning making is also *intersubjective* and *processual*; it is both personal and shared, shaped by one's experiences of self and self in-relation-to-others, and it is temporal and fluid. As a constructionist researcher, I *co-construct* the meanings and interpretations that are negotiated and re-told through my research. I am not a bias to the research, although I do bear a *moral responsibility* to be *reflexive* about how my life experiences and engagement with those whom I encounter in the research process become interwoven in the meaning making process that is re-presented as the experiences of others.

As we move through the chapter I will share with the reader how I have grappled with

various questions and challenges that led to such an understanding and how such assumptions emerge through my own qualitative research. In what follows I organize the content around three areas: constructionism under various labels; constructionism as ontology, epistemology and research paradigm; and intersubjectivity, co-construction and reflexivity. Throughout these sections I weave in empirical examples. Towards the end of chapter, I will also include an extended example from my PhD work with the goal to provide the reader with transparent illustrations of how philosophical assumptions of constructionism can transpire in empirical qualitative research in business and management.

AM I A CONSTRUCTIONIST, SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST, RELATIONAL CONSTRUCTIONIST OR CONSTRUCTIVIST?

In her work on opportunity and new business venturing, Fletcher (2006) delineates between social constructivism and social constructionism. Generally speaking, for her, constructionism is more about 'the relationality between people, institutions, material objects, physical entities and language, rather than the private sense-making activity of particular individuals' (p. 422). She links social constructivism to Vygotsky (1981) and Bruner (1990), whereby 'individual, subjective knowing' (p. 431) is privileged but attention is still given to socio-cultural practices. Constructivism is also often traced back to George Kelly's personal construct theory (see Raskin, 2002). Social constructionism, however, draws more closely from Berger and Luckmann's (1966) work and considers more fully the 'examination of the interplay between agency and structure linking individual constructions of sense-making and enactment to the societal level through processes of structuration (Bouchiki, 1993; Zafirovski, 1999; Bruyat and Julien, 2001; Goss, 2005)' (p. 426). Crotty (2003)

makes a similar distinction and emphasizes how constructionism focuses upon the ‘collective generation of meaning’ (Schwandt, 1994, p. 127; as cited in Crotty, 2003). Crotty (2003) also notes that social constructionism embraces the critical spirit and ‘the hold that culture has on us’, while ‘constructivism tends to resist the critical spirit’ (p. 58).

In one of my meetings with my PhD supervisor I recall her asking me if I could differentiate between constructionism and constructivism, and where did ‘social’ fit into my philosophical understanding. Those questions were important in helping me to grapple with my interpretation of constructionism and its ontological and epistemological assumptions. At the time, it led me to the label ‘social constructivism’ to reflect the approach I had adopted.

In my PhD I used social constructivism to describe my understanding and I explained it in this way:

I was particularly interested in the individual’s meaning making; however, I also felt that the embedded nature of social, cultural, political institutions contributed to the individual’s processes of meaning making. For me it was a matter of emphasis and ‘social constructivism’ captured my acknowledgement of the social, historical and cultural significance (and interaction) of meaning making, as well as my focus upon the individual’s processes of sense making. For this research, a social constructivism perspective was not seen to deny the possibility of emancipation; however, emancipation was not a focal point of exploration. (Grandy, 2006, pp. 108/109)

There are historical and socio-cultural dimensions to constructionism (Schwandt, 2000, p. 197; Weinberg, 2014). Meaning making happens ‘against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices and language, and so forth’ (Schwandt, 2000, p. 197). Gubrium & Holstein (2008) suggest that ‘constructionism’ is more useful to describe a framework ‘for appreciating, not critiquing, everyday reality-constructing practices in general’ (p. 6). Yet, as Berger and Luckmann (1966) contend, the social distribution of knowledge varies, ‘possessed differently by different individuals

and types of individuals’ (p. 60). I suggest then, whether explicit or not, that such meaning making efforts are often inseparable from power dynamics embedded in social relations, structures and systems (see also Haslanger, 2012, for a discussion of this).

Others refer to relational constructionism to describe how knowing is relational and dialogic (see Cunliffe, 2008; Fletcher, 2006; Hosking, 2011), whereby ‘the importance of thinking about ways of being and relating to others’ (Cunliffe, 2008, p. 132) is emphasized. Hosking (2011) contends that relational constructionism is a perspective with its own ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions (see also van der Haar & Hosking’s (2004) conceptual piece on appreciative inquiry and relational constructionism).

These days I am less concerned about the specific label I use to describe my understanding of constructionism.³ I suggest that the labels reflect more a matter of emphasis, rather than fundamental differences. Regardless of the label used, it is more important that the researcher is transparent about key principles underpinning her conceptualization.

CONSTRUCTIONISM AS ONTOLOGY, EPISTEMOLOGY OR RESEARCH PARADIGM?

One of constructionism’s concerns is the sociology of knowledge and thus is epistemological in nature (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Cunliffe, 2008; Gubrium & Holstein, 2008; Thorpe, 2008; Weinberg, 2014). Knowledge and learning are not ‘out there’ to be captured or discovered; rather, knowledge is socially embedded and constructed (Crotty, 2003; Schwandt, 2000; Thorpe, 2008). To ‘know’ is to be interested in understanding multiple ‘truths’, in contrast to searching for ‘the truth where “the search for The Truth is both divisive and limiting”’ (Wang, 2016, p. 572). To ‘know’ is to construct and negotiate meanings in relation to other

people, structures, systems, cultures and histories, over time (Crotty, 2003). To 'know' is to appreciate experience and to understand context (Thorpe, 2008). 'Whereas rational approaches veer towards distance, clarity and generalizability, constructionist approaches favour closeness, complexity and locality' (Thorpe, 2008, p. 115). Typically, constructionist research is more concerned with the *what* or *how* of phenomena, rather than the *why* (Gubrium & Holstein, 2008).

Admitting that social, historical and cultural aspects have an influence on what we can know and learn is often seen as a lack of rigour and insight. Notwithstanding, constructionists have argued there is no escape from prejudice and that ignoring prejudice is itself a prejudice worthy of study in its own right. So rather than look for a perfect experience it is far better to accept it, warts and all. (Thorpe, 2008, p. 116)

Epistemologically, there are differences in the extent to which constructionists recognize subjective knowing alongside objective knowing. Subjective and objective knowing play out in a dialectical process, which reflects tensions and an inter-play between the meanings we construct through and from our lived experiences within systems of 'values, technologies, beliefs, lived histories and material conditions' (Thorpe, 2008, p. 116). For Schwandt (2000, p. 191), constructionism takes into account 'a desire to emphasize the contribution of human subjectivity (intention) to knowledge without sacrificing the objectivity of knowledge'. Crotty (2003) also takes the 'object' very seriously, arguing, 'meaning (or truth) cannot be described as simply "objective". By the same token, it cannot be described simply as "subjective"...we do not create meaning. We construct meaning. We have something to work with. What we have to work with is the world and the objects in the world' (pp. 43–4).

Berger & Luckmann's work (1966) on the *Social Construction of Reality* has been foundational in paving the way for our understanding of constructionism in business and management studies. For Berger and Luckmann, like many constructionists,

meaning making is primarily an epistemological pursuit: 'the phenomenological analysis of everyday life or rather the subjective experience of everyday life refrains from any casual or generic hypothesis as well as assertions about the ontological status of the phenomena analysed' (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 34). For some, there is a real scepticism of the 'real', and Schwandt (2000) contends that for Gergen, at least in his earlier work (1985, 1994, 1995), Potter (1996) and Denzin (1997), constructionism takes no position on ontology in that 'constructionism neither affirms nor denies the "world out there"' (p. 198). In more recent work, however, others such as Elder-Vass (2013) reconcile realism and social constructionism.

While for some constructionism may very well be primarily an epistemological endeavour, others focus upon its ontological considerations (see Cunliffe, 2011; and Shotter, 2010 for a discussion of ontology and constructionism). In my own research on stigma and work (e.g. dirty work) and how individuals construct and make sense of their identities, I have felt compelled to recognize power and material effects (e.g. lack of job security, low pay, abuse) through which the everyday experiences of, for example, exotic dancers and other sex workers are often marked (e.g. Grandy, 2008; Grandy & Mavin, 2012, 2014; Mavin & Grandy, 2013). Similarly, in my work with Sharon Mavin on the experiences of women leaders and how they come to understand and construct meanings of their relations with other women, we have been motivated to better understand the lack of women's representation in senior leadership, the micro violence women leaders experience and the power dynamics that perpetuate these material effects (e.g. Mavin & Grandy, 2016a, 2016b; Mavin et al., 2014). In doing so, such a constructionism approach surfaces ontological assumptions aligned with realism. Further, I would argue that 'meaning making is an "ongoing accomplishment"' (Crotty, 2003, p. 47) and this implies a processual nature of 'reality' and a becoming ontology.

There are other constructionists who are also explicit about their ontological assumptions. For example, Hosking's (2011) conceptualization of relational constructionism accounts for the ontological and power dynamics inherent in constructionism, with the former tied to what I would consider both relational and processual notions of being. Also, in my work with Martyna Śliwa on contemplative leadership we illustrate how social constructionism with a relational ontology can unfold in empirical qualitative research (see Grandy & Śliwa, 2015).

Working through the dialectics of relativism, realism and processual dynamics of 'reality' can often be tricky for the novice qualitative researcher. I recall vividly from my PhD defence when the external examiner, whose own work was informed by constructionism, asked me about my ontological assumptions. Specifically, he was interested in how my understanding of constructionism aligned with my use of the term 'capture', a term used throughout my thesis. We talked through how 'capture' implies a static state whereby reality is out there for us to discover. A camera 'captures' a particular snapshot in time or truth, but my claims to meaning making as fluid, dynamic and re-negotiated contradicted that such static truths could be discovered. In sum, rather than view constructionism as an epistemological stance, following Lincoln and Guba (2000) I understand it as a research paradigm underpinned by particular ontological, epistemological, theoretical and methodological assumptions.

INTERSUBJECTIVITY, CO-CONSTRUCTION AND REFLEXIVITY

Relational constructionism brings to the forefront interrelationships, the dialogical nature of relationships and the dialectics of self, self-in-relation to others and our surroundings (Cunliffe, 2011). Relational constructionism

does not necessarily mean the research is intersubjective, but I contend that it is through such an interpretation of constructionism that the striking significance of intersubjectivity can play out for some. Social realities are always re-produced in human interaction (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Intersubjectivity appreciates how meaning is constructed in relation *to* others and in relation *with* others in the cultural, historical and political structures and systems in which we 'interact'. Cunliffe (2011, p. 658) notes, 'intersubjectivity does not just emphasize the "we" but also embedded and embodied interrelated experiences and in situ meanings (Cunliffe, 2003, 2008), which shift as we move through conversations over time and people (durability and meanings)'. For me, intersubjectivity also considers the self as subjective in that the individual's lived, embodied and reflective experiences are integral to meaning making, which occurs in relation to and with others, thereby implying there will never be completely shared meanings.

My understanding (and articulation) of constructionism as it relates to intersubjectivity has evolved over time, partly in response to reviewers' requests to explain how 'relational' could be about more than 'interaction between' individuals. In a recent piece (Mavin & Grandy, 2016a) we propose a theory of abject appearance to explain women leaders' embodied identity work within a context of intra-gender relations. This theory was developed through an iterative process of data collection, analysis and theory stemming from interviews with 81 leaders, as well as reflective notes and conversations with the research assistants involved and between us as co-authors. Part-way through the journal-reviewing process, we were challenged by a reviewer to clarify what we meant by 'in relations with other women', 'women leaders' and 'social relations'. For us, the accounts of women leaders where they talked about their own experiences without making reference to an 'interaction' with another person (e.g. 'projects of the self', p. 8) informed our theorizing about women leaders, women leaders' relations with other women, and women's leadership.

In revising our work, we came to a particular reading of intersubjectivity that allowed us to deliberate on the complexity of intersubjectivity and view the relational as that which entails the subjective self, self-in-relation to others, and self-in-relation to ‘particular historical and social contexts’ (Mavin et al., 2014, p. 444).

Following Cunliffe and Erikson (2011), we take a relational approach, placing emphasis on social constructions of organizing. We draw upon an intersubjective view of the world where meaning is shaped by one’s experiences and is socially mediated (Anderson, 2008). It is ‘a way of thinking about who leaders are in relation to others within the complexity of experience’ (Cunliffe and Erikson, 2011: 1434). An intersubjective approach provides a bridge between the personal and the shared, the self and the Other to interpret meanings of social and cultural life. We understand women’s intra-gender relations as a way of being in-relation-to other women. ... This means that even when talking of projects of the self this involves intersubjective recognition (Harding et al., 2013). For example, participants sometimes construct projects of the self and reflect on their own identities, as well as construct themselves in-relation-to other women, and in-relation-to men. In our analysis, we include diverse accounts to recognize the ‘entwined nature of our relationships with others’ (Cunliffe and Erikson, 2011: 1434): accounts of women leaders’ in-relation-to men; accounts of self-in-relation-to women and to men; and accounts of, and reflections on, their own experiences offered for other women. (Mavin & Grandy, 2016a, p. 8)

The Researcher as Co-constructor

My understanding of constructionism is one where the researcher is also the researched, and where the subjectivity of the researcher is something to be embraced, not controlled for or eliminated. We ‘are not detached from the social worlds’ we ‘seek to understand’ (Weinberg, 2014, p. 19). In this way, ‘intersubjectivity in qualitative research is the co-constructed encounter between interviewer and interviewee during which each negotiates meaning and identity (Rapley, 2001), since “selves” are actualized in relational contexts (Pezalla, Pettigrew & Miller-Day, 2012)’ (Probst, 2016, p. 3).

We each bring to our research our opinions, values, stories and reflections and ‘all that I can really do – like any other social investigator – is to listen to what my “subjects” have to say and attempt to make a “reading” of their words in light of my own theoretical predispositions and concerns’ (Watson, 1998, p. 140). This is not to say that a qualitative researcher’s involvement in meaning making (in the co-construction of meaning) is something that should be taken for granted by qualitative researchers or that qualitative researchers have an open licence to do whatever they want without considering the implications for research design and rigour. Just the opposite, I contend that qualitative researchers adopting a constructionism approach have a responsibility to write themselves into the research in a way that is transparent, thorough and reflexive. In Corlett and Mavin’s chapter on reflexivity for this handbook, they also delve deeper into how such reflexivity plays out in qualitative research.

In some qualitative research, this notion of researcher as co-constructor manifests in ways where dialogics are more fully recognized and the relationship between ‘participant’ and researcher becomes an opportunity for participant-reflexivity. ‘Reflexivity is driven in conversation’ (Holton & Grandy, 2016, p. 375) and the ‘interaction’ between researcher and participant (through observation, interviews, ethnography, videos) is a relational setting where participants can take ‘time out’ from the mundane of their everyday working lives, retrospectively make sense of experiences, self-reflect and possibly unsettle engrained ways of thinking and doing (Holton & Grandy, 2016; McCann et al., 2008). Corlett (2013) offers the notion ‘participant-focused reflexivity’ to explain the process through which a participant, in interaction with someone or something, experiences an arresting, sticky (Riach, 2009) or striking (Cunliffe, 2002) moment. In a research context, the interview itself or any research ‘encounter’ can serve to trigger a questioning of a participant’s thoughts and actions, and everyday workplace experiences. It can lead to new insights for participants and

ways of thinking, being and doing (Corlett, 2013; Cunliffe, 2002; Hibbert et al., 2010; Holton & Grandy, 2016).

In her qualitative study with public sector professionals, Corlett (2013) suggests that management learning is a reflexive and dialogic practice. She suggests that through researcher–participant engagement, the research process can serve as a dialogic process of learning. She adopts a relational social constructionist approach where the researcher is recognized as co-constructor in meaning making. Through interviews with the researcher, there is a ‘telling, re-telling and recalling of experiences’ and ‘participants are struck and engage in critical self-reflexivity’ (Corlett, 2013, p. 454). Corlett (2013) proposes six phases through which research as a dialogic practice might unfold (storying experience, making meaning, creating order, engagement in critical self-reflexivity, become aware of and change use of language, becoming otherwise). In Corlett’s study, the researcher as co-constructor is central to her understanding of constructionism, data analysis and theory development. Another example of the possibilities of participant-focused reflexivity and co-construction in qualitative research can be seen in my work with Judith Holton, where we explored the experiences of middle managers in healthcare to empirically develop the concept of voiced inner dialogue (VID). In that qualitative study, we describe VID as a type of reflection-on-action and that participants’ VID was triggered in dialogic conversation with the researchers (See Holton & Grandy, 2016).

AN ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE. THEORIZING IDENTITY AT WORK: EXOTIC DANCING AS A SITE FOR ORGANIZATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL RESEARCH

Journal word restrictions mean that empirical qualitative research publications typically only scratch the surface regarding the philosophical

assumptions of the research. It is therefore particularly difficult for the author to write about, or for the reader to see, the ontological, epistemological, theoretical and methodological assumptions that underpin constructionist qualitative research in business and management studies. To further elaborate on how viewing constructionism as a research paradigm might play out in ontological, epistemological, theoretical and methodological terms, in what follows I provide an illustrative example using my PhD work.

For my doctoral work I was interested in theorizing identity at work and looked to an ‘extreme case’ (Kreiner et al., 2009), namely exotic dancing as dirty work, because I expected the everyday experiences surrounding the complexity of identity construction to be particularly raw. I anticipated that such complexity would offer vivid and novel insights transferable to broader understandings of identity and work. My research question was, how does the subjective individual make sense of her work-based identity? I described my philosophical assumptions in this way:

As described by Burrell and Morgan (1979) and Denzin and Lincoln (2000), social constructivism adopts a relativist ontology through which local and specific, multiple, constructed realities emerge. At the same time, by acknowledging the specific historical, cultural and political contexts through which these realities are constructed I adopted a position that also takes into account the material effects produced by these specificities (e.g., stigma). Who we are is not just ideological, there are also material conditions which envelope our sense of selves (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). In particular, my exploration into sex work / dirty work makes me sensitive to the experiences or outcomes (whatever form they might take) of such work for the participants involved in this study (e.g., job insecurity, withdrawal, violence). Social constructivism is seen to envelope relativism through multiple, negotiated meanings (Lincoln and Guba, 2000), realism through consideration of material effects (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000) and movement through ongoing processes of human thoughts, action and interaction. (Chia, 1996). (Grandy, 2006: 107/108)

Undoubtedly, qualitative researchers will also be interested in how ontological and

epistemological considerations, as they relate to constructionism, play out in theoretical and methodological ways. Again, drawing from my PhD work, where I made these connections explicit, theoretically, for that work I fused several streams of literature, including emotion work/management, dirty work and identity. Transparency around how the ontological and epistemological assumptions of one's perspective of constructionism interconnect with theoretical assumptions is important. Below, I offer an example to illustrate the interconnectedness of ontology, epistemology and theory in qualitative research in business and management.

This view of social constructivism also influenced my theoretical approach to this topic. In fusing emotion work and identity, dirty work and identity, and identity regulation as a form of organizational control, and social identity I created space for understanding how the subjective individual makes sense of their identity at work given various historical, social, cultural, and organizational resources that interact and intersect in these processes. So this was constructivism? For example, the conceptualization of identity employed in this research, that is, identity as processual, multiple, contradictory and coupled to our broader lived experiences, is aligned with the relativism, realism and fluidity described above in social constructivism. Moreover, my understanding of emotion as a lived, interactional experience within biological, cultural and social spheres accounts for the interplay between agency and structure similar to the underpinnings of social constructivism. In understanding agency as the struggles in which an individual engages, consciously or otherwise, in choosing to live a particular way (Brewis, 2004), I draw out the subjective individual in emotion work. Furthermore, in exploring exotic dancers' experiences through a dirty work lens and linking it to identity regulation as a form of organization control, I also illuminated the historical and institutional forces that play a role in the co-construction of identity at work for the participants with which I interacted. Overall, the subjective individual was given space to emerge while also considering the interplay with various social, historical and cultural resources in meaning making. (Grandy, 2006, p. 110)

What might such philosophical assumptions mean then for methodology and methods in qualitative research? Constructionism aligns

well with a diverse range of methodologies and methods (see Charreire-Petit & Huault, 2008, for a discussion of the alignment between epistemology and methods as it relates to constructivist research on organizational knowledge). For my PhD research, I adopted what I referred to as the research 'strategies' of ethnography and case study and employed a range of what might be referred to as qualitative methods and 'data', including participant observation, diaries, semi-structured formal and informal interviews, and archival data. The excerpt below highlights how my constructionist assumptions of processual meaning making and meaning making for self in relation-to-others surface through my decision, and approach to, semi-structured interviews.

The intent was to explore if and how individuals engaged in identity work through talking about their work (Watson, 1998). Adopting Watson's (1998:141) view that we come to understand who we are to ourselves and others through interaction and engagement with others, as well as through 'on-going achievement of conversations which go on "in our minds"', I felt interviews conducted in a flexible, informal manner would be a suitable way through which to prompt and re-present how these individuals engage in a simultaneous process of talking and becoming. ...By this, I do not mean that I intended to 'produce' more objective accounts simply that this style of interviewing allowed more room to interpret how meanings were continually being re-constructed throughout the conversations (Mason, 2002). A semi-structured interview guide was used to facilitate this process. (Grandy, 2006, pp. 119–20)

As noted earlier in the chapter, it is important that researchers acknowledge their role in the co-construction of meaning. As an example of the needed transparency around the inseparability between researcher and participants, in my PhD thesis I described my role as co-constructor of meaning. What follows is more a reflective, rather than reflexive, account of this.

As I tell this story, I am not presenting myself as a neutral party presenting 'facts' about work-based identity. As argued by Richardson (2000), I see myself as part of the research process, fully

engaged in constructing, negotiating and struggling with the contradictions and tensions of trying to 'hear' the voices of individuals, while simultaneously co-creating the realities that I present. In effect, I am making sense of how others make sense of their identity construction, or as put by Thomas and Davies (2005:688), my 'interpretations are ... a construction of the construction made by the actors studied. I am not concerned with locating the 'truth' about work-based identity. My concern is in understanding a set of truths that are co-created by those I meet throughout this research and myself. (Grandy, 2006, p. 6)

Through my conversations and engagement with participants I co-constructed and re-presented their identity at work stories as partial, retrospective accounts of their experiences, intertwined with my own lived experiences (e.g., gender, culture, age, education) (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002; Watson, 1998). (Grandy, 2006, p. 109)

My comfort (and at times discomfort) with the fluid and contradictory nature of my own work-based identity construction explains how I interpreted the stories of participants in the way I did. Their struggles and the multiple, contradictory nature of their identity work were particularly salient to me because of my own lived experiences. At the same time, the multiple methods employed in the research does, however, increase the trustworthiness of the discussions offered in the thesis and address criticisms of relativism. (Grandy, 2006, p. 110)

In later work published from the PhD thesis, I further developed my reflexivity, partly in response to reviewers who challenged my co-author and me to engage on a deeper level about our subjectivity and co-construction (see Mavin & Grandy, 2013; Mavin & Grandy, 2016a, 2016b).

CONCLUSION

The many 'versions' of constructionism make it impossible to write a chapter to serve as *the* definitive reference source on it. This chapter delineates *some* of the key considerations relevant for qualitative researchers, particularly those who might be new to constructionism in business and management and perhaps those who come to constructionism with limited experience with research philosophy.

Indeed, there are many other questions that may intrigue readers. For example, for those interested in unpacking differences in how constructionism can be used to answer macro versus micro level questions, the work of Burr (2015) and Cunliffe (2008) will be useful resources. Readers may want to refer to Berger & Luckmann (1966) or Gergen (2015) for a fuller discussion of language and constructionism conceptually, or Samra-Fredericks (2008) for an overview on language and discourse as it relates to constructionism in organizational studies. Other areas in which readers may have an interest relate to recent debates within organization studies on the convergence (or not) of constructionism and critical realism (e.g. Al-Amoudi & Willmott, 2011; Newton et al., 2011).⁴

In preparing to write this chapter, I reflected on the questions that I grappled with during and beyond my PhD research. It has been an interesting writing process to retrospectively reflect on and identify what I think were my most significant struggles more than 10 years ago when I was writing up my thesis. Some of the questions, conversations and reflections that surfaced throughout my writing contemplations were arresting and vibrant memories, while others emerged gradually as I progressed in my writing. This is *my* construction of constructionism for qualitative researchers in business and management, a version that I hope offers valuable insights to constructionist qualitative researchers.

Notes

- 1 I would like to thank Cathy Cassell and Ann Cunliffe for their helpful feedback on an earlier version of this chapter.
- 2 Or perhaps, better put by Berger and Luckmann (1966), seemingly real or objectivized social realities, based on stable interactions.
- 3 See also Harris and Graham (1994) for a discussion of three constructivist paradigms, namely endogenous, exogenous and dialectical.
- 4 Much of the work on critical realism and constructionism is conceptual and not empirical.

REFERENCES

- Al-Amoudi, I. & Willmott, H. (2011). Where constructionism and critical realism converge: Interrogating the domain of epistemological relativism. *Organization Studies*, 32(1), 27–46.
- Alvesson, M. (2010). Self-doubters, strugglers, storytellers, surfers and others: Images of self-identities in organization studies. *Human Relations*, 63(2), 193–217.
- Alvesson, M. & Deetz, S. (2000). *Doing Critical Management Research*. London: Sage.
- Alvesson, M. & Skoldberg, K. (2000). *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
- Anderson, H. (2008). *Conversation, Language, and Possibilities: A Postmodern Approach to Therapy*. New York: Basic Books.
- Berger, P. & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality*. Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Brewis, J. (2004). Refusing to be 'me'. In R. Thomas, A.J. Mills & J. Helms Mills (Eds), *Identity Politics at Work. Resisting Gender, Gendering Resistance* (pp. 23–9). London: Routledge.
- Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of Meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Burr, V. (2015). *Social Constructionism* (3rd ed.). East Sussex: Routledge.
- Burrell, G. & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis*. New Hampshire: Heinemann.
- Charreire-Petit, S. & Huault, I. (2008). From practice-based knowledge to the practice of research: Revisiting constructivist research works on knowledge. *Management Learning*, 39(1), 73–91.
- Chia, R. (1996). *Organisational Analysis as Deconstructive Practice*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Corlett, S. (2013). Participant learning in and through research as reflexive dialogue: Being 'struck' and the effects of recall. *Management Learning*, 44(5), 453–69.
- Crotty, M. (2003). *The Foundations of Social Research. Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*. London: Sage.
- Cunliffe, A. (2002). Reflexive dialogical practice in management learning. *Management Learning*, 33(1), 35–61.
- Cunliffe, A. (2003). Reflexive inquiry in organizational research: Questions and possibilities. *Human Relations*, 56(8), 983–1003.
- Cunliffe, A. (2008). Orientations to social constructionism: Relationally responsive social constructionism and its implications for knowledge and learning. *Management Learning*, 39(2), 125–39.
- Cunliffe, A. (2011). Crafting qualitative research: Morgan and Smircich 30 years on. *Organizational Research Methods*, 14(4), 647–73.
- Cunliffe, A. & Eriksen, M. (2011). Relational leadership. *Human Relations*, 64(11), 1425–49.
- Denzin, N. (1997). *Interpretive Ethnography: Ethnographic Practices for the 21st Century*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (2000). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.) (pp.1–28). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Downing, S. (2005). The social constructionism of entrepreneurship: Narrative and dramatic processes in the co-production of organizations and identities. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 29(2), 185–204.
- Elder-Vass, D. (2013). *The Reality of Social Construction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fairhurst, G. & Grant, D. (2010). The social construction of leadership: A sailing guide. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 24(2), 171–210.
- Fletcher, D. (2006). Entrepreneurial processes and the social construction of opportunity. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 18(5), 421–40.
- Gergen, K. (1985). The social constructionist movement in modern psychology. *American Psychologist*, 40(3), 266–75.
- Gergen, K. (1994). *Realities and Relationships: Soundings in Social Constructionism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gergen, K. (1995). Social construction and the educational process. In L.P. Steffe & J. Gale (Eds), *Constructionism in Education* (pp. 17–39). Mahwah, NJ: Stanford University Press.
- Gergen, K. (2015). *An Invitation to Social Construction* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Grand, S., Rüegg-Stürm, J. & Von Arx, W. (2015). Constructivist epistemologies in strategy as practice research. In D. Golsorkhi, L. Rouleau, D. Seidl & E. Vaara (Eds), *Cambridge Handbook of Strategy as Practice* (pp. 63–78). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Grandy, G. (2006). *Theorizing identity at work: Exotic dancing as a site for organizational and occupational research*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Northumbria University, Newcastle Upon Tyne, England.
- Grandy, G. (2008). Managing spoiled identities: Dirty workers' struggles for a favourable sense of self. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 3(3), 176–98.
- Grandy, G. & Mavin, S. (2012). Occupational image, organizational image and identity in dirty work: Intersections of organizational efforts and media accounts. *Organization*, 19(6), 765–86.
- Grandy, G. & Mavin, S. (2014). Emotion management as struggle in dirty work: The experiences of exotic dancers. *International Journal of Work, Organisation and Emotion*, 6(2), 131–54.
- Grandy, G. & Śliwa, M. (2015). Contemplative leadership: The possibilities for the ethics of leadership theory and practice. *Journal of Business Ethics*. Online First August 8, 2015. DOI 10.1007/s10551-015-2802-2.
- Gubrium, J. & Holstein, J. (2008). The constructionist mosaic. In J. Holstein & J. Gubrium (Eds), *Handbook of Constructionist Research* (pp. 3–10). New York: Guilford Press.
- Harding, N., Ford, J. & Fotaki, M. (2013). Is the 'F'-word still dirty? A past present and future of/for feminist and gender studies in Organization. *Organization*, 20(1), 51–65.
- Harris, K. & Graham, S. (1994). Constructivism: Principles, paradigms, and integration. *Journal of Special Education*, 28(3), 233–47.
- Haslanger, S. (2012). *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hibbert, P., Coupland, C. & MacIntosh, R. (2010). Reflexivity: Recursion and relationality in organizational research processes. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 5(1), 47–62.
- Holton, J. & Grandy, G. (2016). Voiced inner dialogue as relational reflection-on-action: The case of middle managers in healthcare. *Management Learning*, 47(4), 369–90.
- Hosking, D. (2011). Telling tales of relations: Appreciating relational constructionism. *Organization Studies*, 32(1), 47–65.
- James, W. (1909/1996). *A Pluralistic Universe*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
- Kreiner, G., Hollensbe, E. & Sheep, M. (2009). Balancing borders and bridges: Negotiating the work–home interface via boundary work tactics. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52(4), 704–30.
- Larsen, M. & Ø Madsen, C. (2016). Exploring how social poetics can be used to understand processes of management learning. *Management Learning*, 47(5), 489–505.
- Lincoln, Y. & Guba, E. (2000). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.) (pp.163–88). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Mavin, S. & Grandy, G. (2013). Doing gender well and differently in dirty work. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 20(3), 232–51.
- Mavin, S. & Grandy, G. (2016a). A theory of abject appearance: Women elite leaders' intra-gender 'management' of bodies and appearance. *Human Relations*, 69(5), 1095–120.
- Mavin, S. & Grandy, G. (2016b). Women elite leaders doing respectable business femininity: How privilege is conferred, contested and defended through the body. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 23(4), 379–96.
- Mavin, S., Grandy, G. & Williams, J. (2014). Experiences of women elite leaders doing gender: Intra-gender micro-violence between women in management. *British Journal of Management*, 25(3), 439–55.
- McCann L., Morris, J. & Hassard, J. (2008). Normalized intensity: The new labour process of middle management. *Journal of Management Studies*, 45(2), 343–71.
- Mir, R. & Watson, A. (2000). Strategic management and the philosophy of science: The case for a constructivist methodology. *Strategic Management Journal*, 21(9), 941–53.
- Newton, T., Deetz, S. & Reed, M. (2011). Responses to social constructionism and critical realism in organization studies. *Organization Studies*, 32(1), 7–26.
- Pezalla, A., Pettigrew, J. & Miller-Day, M. (2012). Researching the research-as-instrument: An exercise in interviewer self-reflexivity. *Qualitative Research*, 12(2), 165–85.
- Potter, J. (1996). *Representing Reality: Discourse, Rhetoric, and Social Constructionism*. London: Sage.

- Probst, B. (2016). Both/and: Researcher as participant in qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 16(2), 149–58.
- Ramsey, C. (2014). Management learning: A scholarship of practice centred on attention? *Management Learning*, 45(1), 6–20.
- Rapley, T. (2001). The art(fullness) of open-ended interviewing: Some considerations on analysing interviews. *Qualitative Research*, 1(3), 303–23.
- Raskin, J. (2002). Constructivism in psychology: Personal construct psychology, radical constructivism, and social constructionism. In J. Raskin & S. Bridges (Eds), *Studies in Meaning: Exploring Constructivist Psychology* (pp.1–25). New York: Pace University Press.
- Riach, K. (2009). Exploring participant-centred reflexivity in the research interview. *Sociology*, 43(2), 356–70.
- Refai, D., Klapper, R. & Thompson, J. (2015). A holistic social constructionist perspective to enterprise education. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 21(3), 316–37.
- Richardson, L. (2000). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 923–48). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Samra-Fredericks, D. (2008). Social constructionism in management and organization studies. In J. Holstein & J. Gubrium (Eds), *Handbook of Constructionist Research* (pp. 129–52). New York: Guilford Press.
- Schwandt, T. (2000). Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry: Interpretivism, hermeneutics, and social constructionism. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.) (pp.189–214). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Shotter, J. (2010). Movements of feeling and moments of judgement: Towards an ontological social constructionism. *International Journal of Action Research*, 6(1), 16–42.
- Thomas, R. & Davies, A. (2005). Theorizing the micro-politics of resistance: New public management and managerial identities in the UK public services. *Organization Studies*, 26(5), 683–706.
- Thomas, R. & Linstead, A. (2002). Losing the plot? Middle managers and identity. *Organization*, 9(1), 71–93.
- Thorpe, R. (2008). Introduction: Constructionist approaches to management research. *Management Learning*, 39(2), 115–21.
- Tsoukas, H. & Chia, R. (2002). On organizational becoming: Rethinking organizational change. *Organization Science*, 13(5), 567–82.
- Van der Haar, D. & Hosking, D. (2004). Evaluating appreciative inquiry: A relational constructionist perspective. *Human Relations*, 57(8), 1017–36.
- Vygotsky, L. (1981). The genesis of higher mental functions. In J. Wertsch (Ed.), *The Concept of Activity in Soviet Psychology*. Amronk, NY: M.W. Sharpe.
- Wang, B. (2016). The social and historical construction of social constructionism: Prof. KJ Gergen in dialogue. *Culture & Psychology*, 22(4), 565–73.
- Watson, T. (1998). The labour of division: The manager as ‘self’ and ‘other’. In K. Hetherington & R. Munro (Eds), *Ideas of Difference* (pp. 139–52). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Weinberg, D. (2014). *Contemporary Social Constructionism: Key Themes*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Hermeneutics: Interpretation, Understanding and Sense-making

Leah Tomkins and Virginia Eatough

Hermeneutics is concerned with 'the real experience that thinking is'. (Gadamer, 1989: xxxiii)

INTRODUCTION

In general terms, the field of hermeneutics has two main branches: one concerned with the activities of interpretation, the other concerned with the philosophy of understanding (Palmer, 1969). The first of these addresses the practical issue of how to interpret text; the second is more abstract and conceptual, and explores questions such as what we mean by understanding, and how understanding comes about. The first tends to generate rules and standards; the second tries to articulate principles rather than procedures. Therefore, the first exerts a direct influence on methodology; the second exerts a more indirect influence on methodology. Although many discussions of hermeneutics use these two notions of interpretation and understanding interchangeably, we attempt to

maintain a distinction between them to enable the implications of this difference to emerge.

Many of the central motifs of hermeneutics can be traced to classical antiquity, and to ancient Greek philosophy, in particular. For instance, the idea of a hermeneutic circle owes much to Plato's theory of recollection, that is, that we learn about the unknown only by recognising its relationship with something already known. For many readers, however, the origins of hermeneutics are probably more closely associated with biblical exegesis, especially the interpretation of the sacred texts of Judaism and Christianity. For biblical hermeneutics, the challenge is to try to make sense of religious texts despite being distanced from their original meaning, inspiration and reception by hundreds, if not thousands, of years (Jasper, 2004).

The issue of historical distance is worth dwelling on for a moment. Although biblical hermeneutics is concerned with the chronological gap between the reader and the originator of the gospel, this is not the way the concept of 'historical' is normally used in

the hermeneutics of the human and social sciences. Here, the idea of historicity does not mean that something belongs to the past. Instead, it means being part of history, that is, situated in a certain time and place, and having one's way of seeing the world influenced by such grounding in very profound ways. In the sections that follow, history-as-context is woven into the very act of interpretation and the very possibility of understanding.

HERMENEUTIC CIRCLES: THE 'HOW' OF INTERPRETATION AND UNDERSTANDING

One of the most appealing ideas in hermeneutics is that of the hermeneutic circle. The circle is a simple yet powerful symbol, usually taken to signal a move away from linear towards more iterative, integrative thinking. The circle emphasises understanding as relational and referential; we understand something by connecting it with something we already know, whether through comparison, contrast or juxtaposition. There is no single definition of this circle in the hermeneutic corpus; that is, no such thing as *the* hermeneutic circle. Instead, different theorists work with circles to emphasise their own particular interests and concerns.

Whole and Parts

Schleiermacher, the father of modern hermeneutics (Palmer, 1969), uses the notion of the hermeneutic circle to connect whole and parts, making them mutually dependent and co-constitutive. The whole can only be understood as it relates to the parts, and vice versa, the parts can only be understood as they relate to the whole. He explains, for instance, that

the vocabulary and the history of the era of an author relate as the whole from which his writings must be understood as the part, and the whole must, in turn, be understood from the part. Complete knowledge is always in this apparent circle, that each particular can only be understood

via the general, of which it is a part, and vice versa (Schleiermacher, 1998, p. 24).

There are several points of interest in Schleiermacher's words here. Not only is he connecting whole and parts, he is also suggesting that the whole relates to the whole context – culture, customs, discourse, conventions and personal circumstances, etc. – from which the author of the text is writing. Context here is no mere backdrop or scene-setting, it is an integral aspect of hermeneutic understanding. The specific text created by the author – the part – is not just influenced by context, it is constituted by that context. And vice versa, the context is constituted by the production of that text. Hermeneutic experience is therefore inseparable from the cultural and discursive setting in which – and from which – it emerges. Indeed, we need only to consider the common etymology of 'text' and 'context' to see this interweaving.

Moreover, Schleiermacher is also suggesting an important relationship between the general and the particular by relating whole to general and part to particular (there is an obvious etymological connection between 'part' and 'particular'). Schleiermacher elaborates this relationship thus:

the whole is provisionally to be understood as an individual of a genus, and the intuition of the genus, i.e., the formal understanding of the whole, must precede the material understanding of the particular. One can admittedly also only come in the first place to the knowledge of a genus via knowledge of an individual case which belongs under it (Schleiermacher, 1998, p. 232).

This casts an interesting light on the hermeneutic relationship between the specific understanding of an individual case and the broader understanding of the category (genus) into which the case appears to fit. It suggests that, for Schleiermacher, general and particular (or nomothetic and idiographic, as we might think of these things in methodological terms) are not 'either/or' approaches, but instead, they are intimately interrelated; we cannot have one without the other. Relatedly, if inductive approaches are seen as the route from the particular to

the universal, and deductive approaches are the route from the universal to the particular, Schleiermacher's hermeneutic circle encourages us to see these as mutually dependent and co-constitutive. Together, not separately, they fuel hermeneutic interpretation.

So, Schleiermacher's work presents several aspects of hermeneutic circling; interpretation involves a mutually referential and productive relationship between whole and parts, and between the general and the particular. These operate at a number of different levels; for instance, whole can refer to the whole setting of a text's production, to a whole work and to a whole sentence, whilst the concomitant parts refer to a specific work, a specific passage within a work and a specific word within the sentence, respectively. Thus, whenever we consider any particular thing, we should also reflect on the whole – the general thing – to which this particular part belongs. And vice versa, whenever we consider what type of thing we are dealing with, i.e. when we find ourselves putting some sort of label on it, we should also reflect on how our appreciation of that category is brought about by our exposure to specific instances of it. For instance, we know what rain is because of our experiences of actual rainy days; and vice versa, we understand the implications of rainy days because of our more general grasp of what rain is.

Although often seen as conservative, even old-fashioned, Schleiermacher's writings have profound implications for how we see the research endeavour. His hermeneutic circling encourages us away from the confines of the bounded categories to which we have been accustomed – idiographic versus nomothetic and inductive versus deductive. It challenges us to re-think some of our normal conceptions of intellectual inquiry and to question the taken-for-granted assumptions that guide it.

Pre-understanding, Understanding and the Circularity of Being

Moving on to Heidegger (1962), we see the notion of hermeneutic circling used differently

Box 12.1 Hermeneutics in Action

The idea of a co-constitutive relationship between 'text' and 'context' is a core feature of organisational and management research which draws on the hermeneutic tradition, irrespective of whether this is in the Schleiermacher mould or the framing of more recent, critical hermeneuticists such as Ricoeur or Habermas. For instance, Lee's (1994) analysis of email communication examines relationships between the text of individual message fragments and the broader culture and practice of corporate information exchange. Prasad and Mir (2002) present a hermeneutic analysis of CEO correspondence to shareholders as both reflecting and constituting the political and economic context of the global oil industry in the 1970s and 1980s. Genoe McLaren and Helms Mills (2010) examine the problematic relationship between the management textbook as 'text' and the contextual influence of feminism and the civil rights movement on our understandings of management. In these papers, the specific text takes on a particular complexion within the broader institutional and political context; and vice versa, that broader context comes alive through the prism of the specific text.

and more radically. Heidegger shifts the emphasis away from what takes place *within* understanding – and from relatively concrete and practical concerns about whole and parts – towards the question of how any sort of understanding is possible in the first place. Heidegger's philosophy marks a decisive shift in the hermeneutic tradition from the procedural to the existential – from method to ontology.

In Heidegger's view, before we come to understand anything explicitly we already have a pre-conception or pre-supposition of it – a fore-having (*Vorhabe*). This fore-having conditions and is conditioned by any fore-sight (*Vorsicht*) and fore-conception (*Vorgriff*) that we may have in perceptual or cognitive experience. As Heidegger explains,

an interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us. If, when one is engaged in a particular concrete kind of interpretation, in the sense of exact textual interpretation, one likes to appeal to what 'stands there', then one finds that what 'stands there' in

the first instance is nothing other than the obvious un-discussed assumption of the person who does the interpreting (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 191–2).

Thus, Heidegger's most procedurally orientated definition of hermeneutic circling involves manoeuvring between pre-understanding and understanding, between our assumptions about, and our actual encounter with, a text. This means surfacing, interrogating and revising one's pre-conceptions and assumptions as one gathers more information about the object or phenomenon of inquiry.

As Gallagher (1992) suggests, there are useful parallels between this version of Heidegger's hermeneutic circle and the concept of schemata from cognitive and developmental psychology, and the work of Piaget in particular. The concept of schemata holds that our knowledge is organised into patterns and structures which we access and use in the acquisition of new knowledge; we draw on processes of assimilation to incorporate new information when it fits easily with our existing schemata, and processes of accommodation to alter these schemata when new information challenges our existing patterns of thinking. A Heideggerian *Vorhabe* is a schema involving a set of predictions – not fully or consciously formalised – about the object or phenomenon of inquiry, which are either confirmed or challenged in the process of interpretation.

Hermeneutic circling appears in several guises in Heidegger's work, perhaps most significantly in his reflections on the circular structure of *Dasein* or the philosophical question of Being. The circularity of *Dasein* illustrates the notion of historicity that we trailed in our introduction. Our nature as historical beings involves three interwoven qualities of engagement with the world, namely *Verstehen* (understanding), *Befindlichkeit* (attunement) and *Verfallen* (absorption), and their corresponding temporal emphases of future, past (having been) and present. Our lives have a forward thrust because our pre-understandings fuel our understandings (*Verstehen*). They are inextricably infused

with the conventions and patterns of thinking that have been handed down to us in tradition (*Befindlichkeit*), and with which we are now concerned in our day-to-day relations with others (*Verfallen*). Our lives have meaning precisely within this triple-aspect temporal context. As human beings, we cannot *but* interpret what it means to exist within our particular setting, with our particular heritage and with our own ongoing possibilities to make sense of our lives.

So, with Heidegger's circles we have a primordial relationship between pre-understanding and understanding, and a view of human existence as inextricably relational, worldly, temporal and historical. Heidegger's circles are less obviously useful from a methodological perspective, perhaps, but then his aim was a philosophical exploration of how understanding is possible, rather than a normative project of what steps to follow to unpack a text. In a sense, the shift from Schleiermacher to Heidegger is a shift from the search for meaning of a text-in-context to the quest for meaning of a life-in-context.

Anticipation and Encounter

Gadamer (1989) develops the theme of temporality to reveal Schleiermacher's and Heidegger's circles as mutually illuminating, rather than contradictory. For Gadamer, hermeneutic circling is a process whereby 'the anticipation of meaning in which the whole is envisaged becomes actual understanding when the parts that are determined by the whole themselves also determine this whole' (Gadamer, 1989: 291). Thus, Schleiermacher's whole and Heidegger's pre-understandings are connected by a temporal sense of anticipation; we anticipate the whole and we encounter the part. In Gadamer's view, the most foundational of hermeneutic elements is the interpreter's pre-understanding (like Heidegger), which comes from being concerned with the same subject or genus (like Schleiermacher). We have an assumption (whether or not it is explicitly articulated) that we know roughly what we are

dealing with when we approach a text, that is, what category of thing it concerns.

This assumption that we basically know what we are dealing with gives us a sort of confidence. Indeed, our anticipation with any textual encounter is that we will be able to make sense of it, and that we can rely on the text being coherent (we will look at what happens when this expectation is dashed in the next section). This anticipation of intelligibility comes from the way in which author and interpreter are connected in a shared tradition, in a community of understanding. As Gadamer (1989: 292) sees it, 'the task of hermeneutics is to clarify this miracle of understanding, which is not a mysterious communion of souls, but sharing in a common meaning'. When we approach a text, we assume that the world of the interpretation of a text (our world) is connected with the world of the production of the text – whether this connection is across the passage of time, as with ancient texts, or across any differences that arise just because author and interpreter are separate human beings with different perspectives, as with contemporaneous texts. The space between author and interpreter is not a gap, but a bridge.

With Gadamer, therefore, we move from the meaning of a text-in-context and a focus on the text's originator (as per Schleiermacher), through the understanding of a life-in-context and a focus on the person living, i.e. interpreting that life (as with Heidegger), to an emphasis on what happens to connect these, that is, to the space in-between. Gadamer famously calls this a 'fusion of horizons', whereby

one intends to understand the text itself. But this means that the interpreter's own thoughts too have gone into re-awakening the text's meaning ... I have described this as a 'fusion of horizons' ... this is what takes place in conversation, in which something is expressed that is not only mine or my author's, but common (Gadamer, 1989, p. 390).

Gadamer's hermeneutic circling expresses a fundamental intersubjectivity and sociality of understanding.

So, we have seen several hermeneutic circles in this introduction to Schleiermacher,

Heidegger and Gadamer, some with more practical implications for interpretation than others. In the next sections, further aspects of hermeneutic circling will emerge in the work of both these and other theorists in the tradition, underscoring the claim that the circularity of understanding is the most fundamental of all hermeneutic principles (Gallagher, 1992; Palmer, 1969). The hermeneutic circle is not like a clock, with fixed and mutually exclusive points around a rigid circumference, which make it impossible, say, for it to be both 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. simultaneously. Instead, it is an expansive and productive way of thinking about the constitutive relationships between things, steering us away from abstract, 'either/or' thinking which strips human phenomena of contextual richness. The more circular our movements in interpretation, the larger the circle will become, embracing more contexts, more perspectives and more possibilities of understanding.

MEANING, SIGNIFICANCE AND SENSE: THE 'WHAT' OF INTERPRETATION AND UNDERSTANDING

In the previous section, we sketched out various versions of the hermeneutic circle in terms of different emphases in the quest for meaning. We suggested that Schleiermacher's quest is first and foremost for the meaning of a text-in-context; that Heidegger's project is the meaning of a life-in-context; and that Gadamer explores the ways in which both, indeed all, sorts of meaning are only possible because of our embeddedness in shared traditions which allow for continuity and development of understanding. In their various ways, these philosophers see the search for meaning, whether textual or existential, as a living process that is only possible from *within* the world of ideas, objects, debates, possibilities and challenges. Despite their different emphases, they all propose that understanding can never come from nowhere. Even if it feels like a sort

of Eureka moment of sudden insight, the ground has always already been prepared, and its potential significance always already traced. Thus, meaning is contextually and historically constructed, discovered, absorbed and resisted.

What Is Meaning?

Despite the centrality of the notion of meaning in hermeneutics, there is no straightforward definition or agreement over its status beyond this shared emphasis on context and historicity. The meaning of any given text lies in a web of influences and factors, including: the intentions, motivations and style of the author; the grammatical construction and genre of the text itself; and the interests, assumptions and concerns of the interpreter. All these factors are in play irrespective of whether author and interpreter are separated by hundreds of years or are contemporaneous but separated by their individual subjectivities. Within such a complex web, different theorists emphasise different elements, resulting in vibrant debate about what we mean by 'meaning'.

The hermeneutic debate over the status of meaning is usually expressed as the question of reproduction. If the original meaning of a text is reproducible, as Schleiermacher would insist, then this implies that meaning has a sort of objectivity; that is, there is a true or essential meaning latent in the text, waiting to be uncovered if the interpreter uses the right tools and works with appropriate rigour. The notion of objectivity here is not the same as that found in the natural sciences, i.e. it is not about absolute, universal, a-historical fact. Rather, objectivity here means not arbitrary. There are criteria for establishing the greater accuracy or validity of some interpretations over others, the most crucial of which is an interpretation's correspondence with the author's intention. Thus, interpretive work in the Schleiermacher mould involves re-living the author's intuition and inspiration in order to recreate what he or she intended to impart, trying to feel the connections between the author's thoughts and

words at something close to first-hand. This approach sees interpretation as an inversion of the creative process; if creation moves from inspiration to finished product, interpretation moves in the opposite direction, from finished product back to its inspiration. Thus, interpretation is a restorative process which returns and reconnects the author's words 'to their source in the interior life which gave them birth, from which they have become detached' (Betti, 1987: 248).

For Schleiermacher, the aim of hermeneutics was indeed to work back towards the true meaning of a text and the interior life that gave birth to it. His ambition was to rediscover how early Christianity appeared to those receiving the oral gospel in its original setting, and he argued that we must peel away the layers of misunderstanding that have built up over time, preventing us from connecting with the gospel in its originary life force. A striking suggestion in Schleiermacher's thesis is that it might be possible to transpose oneself into the original lived experience so successfully that insights *beyond* the original author's conscious intention emerge. As he explains, 'the goal of hermeneutics is understanding in the highest sense ... to this also belongs understanding the writer better than he understands himself' (Schleiermacher, 1998: 228). In this view, meaning is not only recoverable and reproducible; it is something that might shine more brightly for the interpreter than for the author.

Schleiermacher's emphasis on the reproduction of meaning is challenged by Gadamer. Gadamer resists the proposition that we can get inside the original experience to recapture the author's intentions and inspirations. For Gadamer, hermeneutic understanding is more about production than reproduction, that is, its power lies in its ability to create, not simply restore, meaning: 'Understanding is always more than merely re-creating someone else's meaning. Questioning opens up possibilities of meaning, and thus what is meaningful passes into one's own thinking on the subject' (Gadamer, 1989: 368). Here, understanding

is not the recovery of the past or the recreation of another person's experience, so much as mediation or dialogue between our sense of ourselves and our sense of the author and his/her worldview. This creates the possibility of expanding our range of understanding and thereby changing ourselves and our outlook; that is, of 'being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were' (Gadamer, 1989: 371).

Returning to Gadamer's 'fusion of horizons', the path towards understanding lies not in merging the perspectives of author and interpreter but, rather, in connecting them but acknowledging them as different. This is why Gadamer denies Schleiermacher's claim that hermeneutic interpretation might mean understanding the author better than he/she understands him/herself. As Gadamer argues,

perhaps it is not correct to refer to this productive element in understanding as 'better understanding' ... Understanding is not, in fact, understanding better, either in the sense of superior knowledge of the subject because of clearer ideas, or in the sense of fundamental superiority of conscious over unconscious production. It is enough to say that we understand in a different way, if we understand at all (Gadamer, 1989, p. 296).

Meaning and Significance

A useful way of framing the debate between Schleiermacher's focus on reproduction and Gadamer's emphasis on production is by differentiating between meaning and significance. Meaning is quasi-objective, embedded in the text and interwoven with the factors influencing the text's original production. Significance, on the other hand, belongs more to the life-world of the interpreter, and is imbued with the contextual influences of the text's interpretation. In this definition, meaning is said to be unchanging (if not always accessible), whereas significance changes according to the circumstances of the interpreter. Thus, different interpreters could derive different kinds of significance from a text with a putative single meaning.

Box 12.2 Hermeneutics in Action

The question of reproduction of meaning marks one of the main dividing lines between researchers drawing on different strands in the hermeneutic tradition. As we will see later, most contemporary research in organisation and management directs its focus away from authorial intention, especially research with an explicitly 'critical' emphasis. However, Schleiermacher's interest in authorial intention finds a contemporary expression in hermeneutic research in psychology which explores the subjective, lived experience of a particular organisational or work-based phenomenon. Examples of work in this genre include Gill's (2013) hermeneutic analysis of the emotional experience of status anxiety amongst management consultants, and Cope's (2011) work on the insider experience of entrepreneurial failure. Both these papers use Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith et al., 2009) - a hermeneutic method which is heavily indebted to Schleiermacher. With this method, there is assumed to be a reasonably direct connection between what the author of a text, i.e. the research participant, says and what he or she actually means, feels or intends. The job of the interpreter is to try to feel one's way into the author's experience and explore these connections between words and intentions at something close to first-hand.

This is not to suggest a strict 'either/or' division between Schleiermacher's focus on original meaning and Gadamer's interest in significance. Rather, it is the relationship between the two that is important. In the Schleiermacher mould, Betti (1987) argues that meaning is the necessary pre-condition for all understanding; that is, that one cannot discern the significance of something unless one first knows its meaning. The inversion of the creative process highlighted earlier, i.e. the reconstruction of the author's original intention and inspiration, is simply not possible without the basic building block of meaning itself.

Gadamer, on the other hand, denies the possibility of tracing meaning and significance as independent entities. Understanding

does not mean that the text is given for him as something universal, that he first understands it per se, and then afterward uses it for particular

applications. Rather, the interpreter seeks no more than to understand this universal, the text. ... In order to understand that, he must not try to disregard himself and his particular hermeneutical situation. He must relate the text to this situation if he wants to understand it at all (Gadamer, 1989, p. 321).

In this view, significance rather than meaning is the inescapable pre-condition for understanding. Understanding cannot *but* take place within the interpreter's own hermeneutic horizon of significance. This is why, for Gadamer, all understanding is ultimately self-understanding.

As well as not being sufficient, meaning is not even necessary for understanding in Gadamer's work, for he sees potential significance even where there is no readily discernible meaning. The distinction between meaning and significance therefore helps to frame discussion of what happens when problems are encountered and we cannot get a handle on a text. This is an important issue, because we have an expectation – usually unconscious – when we approach a text that we will be able to make something of it. In the following sections, we explore barriers and disruptions to understanding using the notion of 'sense' as an umbrella term to encompass both constant, quasi-objective meaning – a text's sense-per-se – and contingent, reflexive significance – its sense-for-us. This allows different perspectives to emerge on what happens when sense eludes us.

Barriers to Sense: The Status of Prejudice

In a Schleiermacher-inspired quest for meaning, barriers to sense are obstacles to be overcome mostly through the application of technique:

misunderstanding is either a consequence of hastiness or of prejudice. The former is an isolated moment. The latter is a mistake which lies deeper. It is the one-sided preference for what is close to the individual's circle of ideas and the rejection of what lies outside it. In this way one explains in or

explains out what is not present in the author (Schleiermacher, 1998, p. 23).

If we do not understand what the author of a text is trying to say, this is either because of sloppiness or because we are filtering the text in terms of what is familiar to us. If we become aware of this, we should re-double our efforts to examine the text itself, perhaps drawing someone else into the interpretive endeavour in order to 'triangulate' and hence objectify our textual readings.

We saw earlier that Heidegger and Gadamer took a different view of an interpreter's pre-conceptions. Gadamer, in particular, sees anticipation of a text's meaning as a necessary condition for interpretation. In other words, without assumptions, expectations and prejudices, there is no way into the hermeneutic circle; no way of gauging or even intuiting what the text might be about. This is not to imply that one applies or deploys prejudices in a conscious decision to enter the hermeneutic circle as if from outside but, rather, that we cannot *but* have prejudices by virtue of already being in the midst of the world of ideas; that is, always involved in a cultural conversation that has already started. As Gadamer (1989: 278) explains, 'long before we understand ourselves through the processes of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society and state in which we live'. In this view, prejudices are not blockages to interpretation, they are its enablers. They are the very scaffolding of understanding.

The desire to rehabilitate the notion of prejudice lies behind Gadamer's charge against the Enlightenment and the scientism it inspired for their 'prejudice against prejudice itself, which denies tradition its power' (Gadamer, 1989: 273). This is not to say that Gadamer is anti-science, but, rather, that he believes the quest for scientific objectivity masks the prejudices with which all human inquiry is both necessarily and productively interwoven. The 'prejudice against prejudice' obscures the way in which even the most rigorous scientific experiment is a historical event, which

only has salience because of what has come before, what tools and techniques have been established for the purpose, and how the scientist hopes to apply his findings. Thus, for Gadamer, the hermeneutic task is not to try to rid oneself of biases and assumptions, but, instead, to acknowledge them and learn to distinguish between those that are productive and those that are non-productive. Productive prejudices help us to expand our horizons and reach out to others, in person and in text. Non-productive prejudices keep us locked in solipsism and single-mindedness.

Disruptions to Sense: Encounters with Non-Sense

So, prejudices mould our experience of a text into something more-or-less intelligible, that is, into something which is coherent in itself, but not necessarily consistent with the original meaning of the text or the intention of the author. Prejudices are more likely to be seen as a barrier to understanding if one's emphasis is on meaning, and as an enabler of understanding if one's focus is on significance. A similar pattern emerges when we turn to the question of disruptions to sense; that is, when no such intelligibility or coherence seems possible; in other words, when sense breaks down.

For hermeneutic theorists interested in meaning, the absence of sense is a problem to be resolved, that is, it is a failure of interpretation. For those more concerned with significance, on the other hand, breakdowns of sense are not only inevitable, they are constructive. Thus, Gadamer sees value in being surprised, befuddled or pulled up short by a text. Because we assume when we approach a text that we will find some sort of sense in it, we get lulled into a false sense of security which works *against* understanding. It is only when the attempt to engage with a text fails that we are jolted into having to work at understanding it. It is the shock of not understanding, not finding sense, which alerts us to the presence of our own preconceptions and the importance of placing these within

Box 12.3 Hermeneutics in Action

The hermeneutic interest in the historicity of science can be traced in several papers which problematise the professions which are assumed to be very technical, scientific and objective, e.g. accountancy, auditing and information systems. For instance, Francis (1994) draws on Gadamer to argue that 'good' auditing practice emerges not from applying objective standards and methodologies, but rather, from seeing auditing as lived experience, in which understandings of, enablers of, and barriers to 'good practice' are embedded in tradition. Llewellyn (1993) invokes Ricoeur for her analysis of accounting practice, suggesting that periods of organisational change lend themselves especially powerfully to hermeneutic reflection, because they expose the contingency of, and competing claims for, legitimacy of meaning. Klein and Myers (1999) examine the historicity of information systems strategy, suggesting that a hermeneutic approach can shed light on the crucial question of why so many IS implementations fail. In their various ways, these papers all challenge the 'prejudice against prejudice'.

a larger web of possible understandings. In short, we need disruptions to sense to trigger hermeneutic reflection (Gadamer, 1989).

From Gadamer's perspective, disruptions are valuable because they alert us to a tension between text, author and interpreter which might not lend itself to easy resolution. The task of hermeneutics is not to try to cover up this tension, but, rather, to consciously bring it out as a way of reflecting on the differences between horizons, the very fact of otherness, and the interplay between familiarity and strangeness which is essential to understanding. Thus, a further kind of hermeneutic circling emerges between what we can capture and thematise and what seems to elude such capture and thematisation. Those seeking quasi-objective meaning in the Schleiermacher tradition will engage in this circling in the hope of eventually privileging sense over non-sense, resolution over irresolution of meaning. Those interested in the contingencies and fluidities of significance in the Gadamer mould are more likely to view this circling as a way of keeping the

non-sense in play and the tensions alive; for without them, the prospects for understanding remain limited to what we already know.

MOTIVATIONS AND INTERESTS: THE 'WHY' OF INTERPRETATION AND UNDERSTANDING

In the discussion so far, we have assumed, not problematised, the historical embeddedness of text, author and interpreter. In defining both meaning and significance as accessible only from within the world of ideas, discourses and conventions, the theorists we have focused on share a concern for assimilation within tradition.

However, there is a more critical strand in hermeneutics which challenges this view from within tradition, suggesting that such an emphasis on assimilation and accommodation simply reproduces existing power relations, many of which are inimical to human flourishing. Critical hermeneutics is interested not only in the 'how' and the 'what' of sense-making, but also in the question of 'why' we engage with texts, including exposing the interests, motivations and implications of such engagement. So, in this section, we move on from the distinction between meaning and significance to approach the issue of interpretation from a different angle, namely the question of whether our basic motivation is to believe or distrust, that is, to reinforce or unsettle meaning. One way to approach this question is through the distinction between a 'hermeneutics of faith' and a 'hermeneutics of suspicion'.

Faith or Suspicion?

The importance of faith in hermeneutics owes much to its roots in biblical exegesis. Thus, a 'hermeneutics of faith' involves a fundamental motivation to believe (and suspend disbelief) in textual pronouncements, whether holy or secular. Faith motivates the kind of hermeneutics

advocated by Schleiermacher and his followers, with their reliance on methodology and intellectual self-discipline, and their relative confidence about the reproducibility of meaning. Faith also underpins Gadamer's work, with its optimism about the possibility of productive and mutual understanding. Gadamer's faith is in the connective and creative potential of human beings, rather than the enduring meaning of a text, but it is faith nonetheless.

The distinction between faith (*la foi*) and suspicion (*le soupçon*) is elaborated especially powerfully by Ricoeur (1970), although it appears in the hermeneutic canon long before his time (Jasper, 2004). Faith assumes the possibility of bringing meaning into the realm of conscious reflection, whereas suspicion aims to expose and reduce the lies and illusions of consciousness. For Ricoeur (1970: 28), the 'hermeneutics of faith' brings a kind of naïvete into the hermeneutic circle; 'believe in order to understand, understand in order to believe'. Here, Ricoeur uses the notion of faith in a similar way to Gadamer's anticipation of what a text is about, but Ricoeur nudges us to consider the motivation, not just the content, of such anticipation.

Much of Ricoeur's work concerns the interpretation of symbols, including those appearing in myths, dreams and ideological narratives; that is, he is interested in meanings as they are both concealed and revealed, both absent and present. This interest in the sense *beneath* the sense aligns Ricoeur with a 'hermeneutics of suspicion', which challenges the trustworthiness of text and urges us to reach behind surface meanings to try to tease out other hidden meanings. For Ricoeur, the task of interpretation is to expose these multiple meanings, not in order to resolve conflicts of understanding between different belief systems, but rather to highlight the contingencies, motivations and implications of their construction.

There are interesting points of connection between Ricoeur's interest in the direct and indirect meanings of symbols – the sense beneath the sense – and Gadamer's elaboration

of foregrounding. For Gadamer, foregrounding 'is always reciprocal. Whatever is being foregrounded must be foregrounded from something else, which, in turn, must be foregrounded from it. Thus all foregrounding also makes visible that from which something is foregrounded' (Gadamer, 1989: 304). Both Gadamer and Ricoeur encourage us to consider human phenomena in terms both of what they are and of what they are not. So, to our list of definitions of the hermeneutic circle, we now add circling between presence and absence.

For Ricoeur, the three foremost practitioners of suspicion are Freud, Marx and Nietzsche (Ricoeur, 1970). In their various ways, these theorists argue that meaning is not reducible to the immediate or straightforward consciousness of meaning, and they see symbol as the representation of false consciousness; that is, of distorted sense-making. For Freud, false consciousness manifests in dreams and neurotic symptoms as signs of repressed libido; for Marx, it is economic alienation and the ideological disguise of class domination; for Nietzsche, it is the apparently timeless concepts of value and reason masking hidden strategies of the Will to Power. For these three practitioners of suspicion, 'to seek meaning is no longer to spell out the consciousness of meaning, but to decipher its expressions' (Ricoeur, 1970: 33). This kind of sense-making involves cracking the codes of the systems of contemporary life, whether moral, institutional or psychological. It means being distrustful of whatever appears to us in consciousness, whether this is explicit knowledge or more tacit intuition, for *both* modes are potentially manifestations of false, not true, consciousness. In this way, the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' mounts a radical challenge to what we think we know, feel and believe; that is, to subjectivity itself.

Compliance or Emancipation?

With this emphasis on the enigma and unreliability of meaning, hermeneutics moves

towards the domain of critique and brings us to the work of Habermas. We do not have space to do justice to Habermas here; but we include him in this overview to show the development of hermeneutics towards a more political, ideological take on sense-making. With Habermas (1967), we find a radical critique of the role of tradition in shaping our understandings of both self and world. Connection or assimilation within tradition is effectively just compliance or conformity with tradition, and thereby allows ruling power structures to go unnoticed and unchallenged. Habermas criticises Gadamer for failing to recognise the way in which interpretation is distorted by compulsion and coercion. Whereas Gadamer sees misunderstanding as basically a failure of dialogue (which can be corrected and used constructively), Habermas sees misunderstanding as the result of consciously perpetrated falsities such as propaganda and political rhetoric. Whereas Gadamer sees understanding as our historical heritage, shaped by the discursive fabric of family, society and state before it becomes personal reflection, Habermas sees *misunderstanding* as our historical heritage, *distorted* by the power relations of family, society and state which need to be exposed and undermined in critical reflection.

Habermas proposes a 'depth hermeneutics' to decipher the deceptions of sense-making. This approach supplements personal reflection with 'meta-hermeneutical' explanation, which seeks to highlight sources of distortion and manipulation, such as economic status, social class and gender relations. For Habermas, every interpretation must come under suspicion for being inspired by such material relations, which shape both interpretation and understanding in ways that go beyond conscious reflection and linguistic sense-making: 'the linguistic infrastructure of a society is part of a complex that, however symbolically mediated, is also constituted by the constraint of reality ... behind the back of language' (Habermas, 1967: 361). Critical reflection is required to stand back from the

Box 12.4 Hermeneutics in Action

An interest in power, discourse, resistance and compliance has directed the majority of contemporary hermeneutic researchers of organisation and management towards the philosophies of Ricoeur and Habermas. A particular strand of this work considers organisational communication, and the way in which corporate stories and accounts both reflect and construct a particular view of events. For instance, Gopinath and Prasad (2012) use a critical hermeneutic framework to analyse accounts of Coca Cola's exit from India, suggesting that critical hermeneutics has a particular relevance in international studies where accusations of cultural insensitivity expose competing and contradictory versions of events. Gabriel (1991) invokes Ricoeur to explore the subterranean aspects of organisational culture and highlight the sense beneath the sense of our constructions of organisational life. These and other works in this critical strand of hermeneutics are uninterested in and/or suspicious of the author of a text's original intention, and focus instead on the multiple interpretations that organisational phenomena both invoke and reveal.

processes of tradition in order to evaluate the constraints to which it subjects us. The 'deep' meaning to be discovered by the critically suspicious interpreter will not only be enlightening, it will also be emancipating.

Gadamer argues that such a desire to move outside the constraints of tradition is untenable, suggesting that Habermas's concept of emancipation is as historically and contextually bound as the power relations it seeks to unmask, i.e. that it is blind to its own ideology. The notion that one could stand outside one's historical setting to conduct an ideological critique simply masks the ways in which resistance is as culturally and discursively mediated as compliance – just as revolution tends to substitute one regime for another, rather than ushering in a genuinely different way of life. As Gadamer (1989: 573) puts it, the nature of critical reflection is that 'in dissolving the old ends, it concretizes itself again in new ones. ... It would become vacuous and undialectical, I think, if it tried to think the idea of a *completed* reflection ...

so as to achieve an ultimate, free and rational self-possession'. Trying to think oneself out of the hermeneutic circling of tradition, context and relationality – whether in the service of emancipation from repression or any other purpose – 'would be like trying to step outside of our own skins' (Gallagher, 1992, p. 87).

The critical strand of hermeneutics is a good place to bring our overview of these key motifs to a conclusion, or, rather, a provisional resting point. For it is with Habermas's arguments, in particular, that we begin to see the hermeneutic circle collapse, or at least buckle significantly. We have discussed several aspects of hermeneutic circling in this chapter – whole and part; general and particular; pre-understanding and understanding; anticipation and encounter; familiarity and strangeness; sense and non-sense; belief and understanding; and presence and absence. But with Habermas's emphasis on the material factors which distort our linguistic, reflective sense-making, we need some sort of 'bird's eye view' to be able to distinguish between compliant and emancipatory understanding. Thus, it is here that the circle is no longer able to contain the experiences of understanding. It is here that we start to move away from the world of interpretation and into the domain of explanation – that fundamental distinction between hermeneutics as the universal methodology of the humanities and causal epistemology as the universal methodology for the natural sciences (Dilthey, 1958). It is here that hermeneutics confronts its own limits.

HERMENEUTIC INFLUENCES ON ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES

The most concrete way in which hermeneutics has influenced organisation and management studies is by inspiring various approaches to the interpretation of text. In this context, 'text' can be something developed specifically for research purposes, such as a transcript of an

interview with a participant, or it can be something that appears more naturalistically which is then analysed for research purposes, such as a leader's public speech or an organisation's press releases. Most of the time, 'text' refers to something linguistic, whether the written or the spoken word. However, one also finds 'text' used to refer to non-linguistic phenomena, such as organisational practices. Nevertheless, the written script remains the paradigm 'text', and 'reading' is the paradigm interpretive activity.

Interpretive Methods

The results of such interpretive 'readings' can take a number of forms; that is, the content of texts can be abstracted and shaped into themes, discourses, narratives, moments, incidents, etc. It is interesting to consider how prevalent the theme has become as the basic building block of interpretive research, as evidenced by the wealth of thematic analysis techniques (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Hermeneutics invites us to reflect on whether the theme is necessarily the most appropriate foundation-stone of human inquiry. It raises the question of how we might shape and structure our interpretations in terms of values, textures or relations, or indeed by dimensions of hermeneutic circling, such as presences and absences.

The distinctions between meaning and significance and between faith and suspicion find their way into the choices we make between individual interpretive methods. For instance, one of the methods we have used, IPA (Smith et al., 2009), is a psychological approach in the Schleiermacher tradition. IPA focuses on meaning as the pre-condition of understanding, and defines its quality and validity metrics accordingly. It is basically inspired by a hermeneutics of faith, in that empathy, connection and attunement guide the interpreter towards an understanding of a particular phenomenon through the participant's eyes, encouraging a sense for the participant's intended meaning through a kind of reliving of experience.

As we have seen in this chapter, such emphasis on an author's intention and inner life-world is relatively unusual in organisation and management studies (Prasad, 2002). This is due to the field's concern for the dynamics of power and institution and its relative disinterest in first-person experience (Nord & Fox, 1999), at least until recent 'turns' to emotion and embodiment. Critical hermeneutic explorations of organisation and management are, therefore, more likely to position the interpretive endeavour as an act of suspicion than of faith (Genoe McLaren & Helms Mills, 2010; Gopinath & Prasad, 2012).

For instance, Phillips and Brown (1993) analyse corporate advertising by focusing on hermeneutic 'moments', encompassing the social-historical moment, the formal moment of the text itself and the interpretation–reinterpretation moment. The social-historical moment incorporates questions about who produced the text, who was the intended recipient, what the text is supposedly about, and where the text fits in the broader social and historical context. The formal moment incorporates questions about the syntactical and lexical conventions of a text, and the way in which belonging to a particular genre encourages a certain kind of reading. The interpretation–reinterpretation moment unfolds in the interplay between these issues of production, interpretation and situation. Thus, this method has elements of Gadamer's 'fusion of horizons', Habermas's concern for ideology and Ricoeur's emphasis on multiple meanings, as well as the core hermeneutic theme of reciprocity between 'text' and 'context'.

An alternative approach to critical hermeneutics is outlined by Klein and Myers (1999). This describes guidelines for critical hermeneutics in terms of the interdependency of parts and whole; critical reflection on the social and historical background of the research setting, so that the intended audience can see how the situation under investigation emerged; the principles of reflexivity and interaction between researchers and participants, so that the nature of data as collectively

and socially constructed can emerge; the role of dialogical reasoning and sensitivity to possible contradictions of interpretation; and finally, and explicitly, the principle of suspicion, and the importance of seeing past what participants *say* to examine the work that their speech does to reinforce or undermine certain versions of events. This emphasis on suspicion reveals this particular method's sympathy for the work of Ricoeur and Habermas over those writers in the hermeneutic tradition who are motivated more by faith.

These interpretive methods in organisational research connect with the crucial constitutive importance of context in human understanding. This is context as discourse, ideas, habits, practices, norms, systems, etc., and it directs the hermeneutic gaze to the public as well as the private ways in which sense is generated, shaped, experienced and resisted, including the ways in which both researchers and participants are enmeshed and complicit in promoting some versions of sense over others. Researchers reach for different methodological options, depending on whether they are primarily interested in capturing and crystallising a participant's life-world or exposing and exploring the contingency, vulnerability and ideology of sense-making. Despite their different emphases, these methods are all fundamentally 'historical' in the way we have defined historicity in this chapter.

Revisiting Sense-making

At the outset of this chapter, we suggested that hermeneutics encompasses two things which are interrelated but different: the activities of interpretation and the philosophy of understanding. In its definition as the activity of interpretation, hermeneutics becomes one of a number of different methodologies for qualitative inquiry, one of the items in the bottom left-hand corner of Burrell and Morgan's (1979) classic taxonomy. This locates hermeneutics in the quadrant which represents (1) subjectivity on the subjective versus objective dimension and (2) regulation on the regulation

versus radical change dimension. Given our discussion of the meaning/significance debate, of course, we would challenge the suggestion that hermeneutics is *only* concerned with subjectivity; and with the faith/suspicion framing, we would argue against its characterisation as *only* regulatory. We might even want to argue, with Dilthey (1958), that hermeneutics is *the* overarching method for inquiry into human and social phenomena, that is, that it should be present in all the boxes in any taxonomy of qualitative methods.

In its second definition as a philosophy of understanding, however, hermeneutics seems to defy such allocation into boxes, because boxes imply that human phenomena can be disentangled and categorised into things that make *sense*. In this chapter, we have seen several arguments for there being more to understanding than sense; that is, more than what we can capture, encapsulate, describe and control. These include acknowledging a role for intuition in interpretation; the elusiveness of meaning hidden behind symbol; the role of the pre-conscious, including the constitutive power of public meanings that pre-date private ones; the role of strangeness and unfathomability in the dynamic of hermeneutic circling; and the radical challenge to consciousness for its ideological distortions. Thus, in several ways, hermeneutics takes us beyond sense and our attempts to harness it.

We see fascinating connections between this challenge to the primacy of sense and Weick's (1995) organisational sense-making approach. Indeed, Weick's description of sense-making as 'a frame of mind about frames of mind' (Weick, 1995: xii) has distinct Heideggerian overtones. Recent forays with Weick's work have downplayed the primacy of sense, if by sense we mean our efforts to resolve and settle things, and to order our worlds into coherent, manageable entities. Holt & Cornelissen (2013) suggest that we have turned organisational sense-making into an almost exclusive focus on what is practically and instrumentally desirable, retrospectively orientated, and driven by the need to control events and lessen cognitive dissonance. Returning Weick's sense-making to its

Heideggerian roots, they argue that we should redefine sense to encompass a broader range of experiences. These include our moods of dislocation and unease, which signal some kind of shift or disconnect between self and world. For instance, in their different ways, boredom and anxiety both signal that the world is not anchoring us; and feelings of awe can be read as a sign that the world may be overwhelming us (Holt & Cornelissen, 2013). Moods suggest that there is more to understanding than what we can grasp and intellectualise. They invite an engagement with hermeneutics as philosophy, and as 'reflection on the non-epistemological conditions of epistemology' (Ricoeur, 1981, p. 75).

A Hermeneutic Orientation

This kind of philosophical reflection on where 'sense' fits within our overall experience of ourselves and our worlds is less obviously useful from an applied perspective than the more concrete explorations of method inspired by the Schleiermacher school. Or, rather, it suggests a different kind of application, one directed at the orientation of research as much as its methods. It is inspired by the Heideggerian insistence that interpretation is not necessarily carried out verbally or thematically, but rather in the way we relate to things within the field of our concerns.

A hermeneutic orientation towards research is one which emphasises the mutually productive and illuminating relationships between things; the presence of other possibilities and perspectives; the value of dialogue and reflection; and a tolerance of ambiguity, inconsistency and disjuncture in meaning. It involves reflecting in depth about the very nature of our research questions because, as we have seen in this chapter, different hermeneutic solutions are helpful for different kinds of problems. As Gadamer suggests, one of the cornerstones of hermeneutics is this particularity, for 'we can understand a text only when we have understood the question to which it is an answer' (Gadamer, 1989: 363).

The hermeneutic orientation that we have in mind draws on a range of ideas from the theorists we have discussed. It attempts to incorporate their differences as well as their commonalities, that is, to make use of the dialogue, even tension, between positions and possibilities. It engages with both faith and suspicion, and with the relations between them. Thus, we are able to be suspicious of X only because we have faith in Y, where Y might be only our ability to ask the right questions (Gallagher, 1992). We think such an integrative hermeneutic instinct has an important role to play in contemporary organisation and management studies, especially in relation to bridging the gulf that sometimes appears between functionalist and/or psychological approaches and more critical alternatives.

Perhaps more than anything, a hermeneutic orientation involves a respectful, reflexive participation in tradition, both in terms of what we inherit and in terms of what we might pass on. In a phrase used by both Gadamer and Ricoeur, hermeneutic reflection entails joining a conversation which has already begun, and which none of us individually can conclude. Understanding is as much experience as achievement, as much participation as clarification, as much tone as method. It is an ongoing project; we will never reach completion or total synthesis, but this does not mean disintegration, fragmentation or pointlessness, either. In this spirit, we give the remaining space to Gadamer (1989, p. 581):

I will stop here. The ongoing dialogue permits no final conclusion. It would be a poor hermeneuticist who thought he could have, or had to have, the last word.

REFERENCES

- Betti, E. (1987). On a general theory of interpretation: The *raison d'être* of hermeneutics. *American Journal of Jurisprudence*, 32(1), 245–68.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.

- Burrell, G. & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis: Elements of the Sociology of Corporate Life*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Cope, J. (2011). Entrepreneurial learning from failure: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 26(6), 604–23.
- Dilthey, W. (1958). *Gesammelte Schriften (Complete Works), 1913–1967, Volumes I–XII*. Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner.
- Francis, J.R. (1994). Auditing, hermeneutics, and subjectivity. *Accounting, Organizations, and Society*, 19(3), 235–69.
- Gabriel, Y. (1991). Turning facts into stories and stories into facts: A hermeneutic exploration of organizational folklore. *Human Relations*, 44(8), 857–75.
- Gadamer, H.G. (1989). *Truth and Method* (J. Weinsheimer & D.G. Marshall, trans.). New York: Continuum.
- Gallagher, S. (1992). *Hermeneutics and Education*. Albany, NY: State of New York Press.
- Genoe McLaren, P. & Helms Mills, J. (2010). Appropriation, manipulation, and silence: A critical hermeneutic analysis of the management textbook as a tool of the corporate discourse. *Management and Organizational History*, 5(3–4), 408–27.
- Gill, M.J. (2013). Elite identity and status anxiety: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of management consultants. *Organization*, 22(3), 306–25.
- Gopinath, C. & Prasad, A. (2012). Toward a critical framework for understanding MNE operations: Revisiting Coca Cola's exit from India. *Organization*, 20(2), 212–32.
- Habermas, J. (1967). A Review of Gadamer's Truth and Method. In G.L. Ormiston & A.D. Schrift (Eds) (1990). *The Hermeneutical Tradition: From Ast to Ricoeur* (pp. 213–44). Albany NY: SUNY Press.
- Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and Time* (J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, trans.). New York: Harper & Row.
- Holt, R. & Cornelissen, J. (2013). Sensemaking revisited. *Management Learning*, 45(5), 525–39.
- Jasper, D. (2004). *A Short Introduction to Hermeneutics*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Klein, H.K. & Myers, M.D. (1999). A set of principles for conducting and evaluating interpretive field studies in information systems. *MIS Quarterly*, 23(1), 67–93.
- Lee, A.S. (1994). Electronic mail as a medium for rich communication: An empirical investigation using hermeneutic interpretation. *MIS Quarterly*, 19(2), 143–57.
- Llewellyn, S. (1993). Working in hermeneutic circles in management accounting research: Some implications and applications. *Management Accounting Research*, 4(3), 231–49.
- Nord, W.R. & Fox, S. (1999). The Individual in Organizational Studies: The Great Disappearing Act? In S.R. Clegg & C. Hardy (Eds) *Studying Organization: Theory and Method Part 1* (pp. 142–69). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Palmer, R.E. (1969). *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger and Gadamer*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Phillips, N. & Brown, J.L. (1993). Analyzing communication in and around organizations: A critical hermeneutic approach. *Academy of Management Journal*, 36(6), 1547–76.
- Prasad, A. (2002). The contest over meaning: Hermeneutics as an interpretive methodology for understanding texts. *Organizational Research Methods*, 5(1), 12–33.
- Prasad, A. & Mir, R. (2002). Digging deep for meaning: A critical hermeneutic analysis of CEO letters to shareholders in the oil industry. *Journal of Business Communication*, 39(1), 92–116.
- Ricoeur, P. (1970). *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (D. Savage, trans.). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Ricoeur, P. (1981). *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*. (J.B. Thompson, trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schleiermacher, F. (1998). *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings* (A. Bowie trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, J.A., Flowers, P. & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*. London: Sage.
- Weick, K.E. (1995). *Sensemaking in Organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Critical Realism and Qualitative Research: An Introductory Overview

Steve Vincent and Joe O'Mahoney

INTRODUCTION

Many of the methodology textbooks that business and management students are encouraged to use employ a simple and, in our view, flawed dichotomy between objectivist (positivist, deductive and empiricist) approaches, which are typically aligned with quantitative empirical methods, and subjectivist (social constructionist, inductive and interpretive) approaches, which are typically aligned with qualitative empirical methods. Whilst this dichotomy certainly simplifies approaches to research, it is based on the odd assumption that some data should, a priori, be ruled out simply on the basis of whether it is appropriate and consonant with the general orientation of the approach. Such an assumption is not only, as we discuss later, theoretically flawed, but is also out of kilter with the day-to-day experiences of individuals: counting can often give us insights into meaning or values (for example when suicide rates rise), and interpreting sights and sounds can give us greater understanding

of an external and objective reality (think about all the signs drivers respond to when obeying 'the rules of the road', for example).

Critical realist scholars seek to overcome this odd dualism (objectivism or subjectivism) by distinguishing between ontology (what is real) and epistemology (what we know). Critical realist scholars assume the existence of an objective ('intransitive') world that has powers and properties that can be more accurately known as a consequence of scientific endeavour, but recognise that knowledge is a subjective, discursively bound (i.e. transitive) and constantly changing social construction. Crucially, for science, social science, and for the purposes of this chapter, careful methodological practices form a bridge between our epistemological knowledge and ontological reality: good research means we can understand the world better. This marriage of epistemological relativism and ontological realism, however, presents novel challenges to qualitative social scientists, not least of which is the question of how researchers make discoveries

about any social formation from qualitative datasets when participants may be unaware of or (consciously or otherwise) misrepresent the social formations of which they are a part.

In our view, dealing with this problem requires qualitative researchers to think about the research act in theoretically grounded ways (see also, Edwards et al., 2014), which we attempt to distil in this chapter. We begin by offering a brief introduction to critical realism, as a particular philosophy of science, before then sketching out the implications of this position for theorising with qualitative data. The overall argument is that critical realist researchers should be led by ontological concerns and, consequentially, they should embrace all qualitative (and many quantitative) research techniques. However, their approach to data collection and analysis is likely to be different from those who are committed to alternative ontological positions because their approaches to theorising, which we sketch below, are also distinctive.

CRITICAL REALIST ONTOLOGY

The origin of critical realism, as a philosophy of science, is attributed to a series of books by Roy Bhaskar (1975, 1979, 1994). He argues that the universe, including the social world, is a *stratified and open system of emergent entities*. This section breaks this phrase down into simple parts in the effort to clarify its meaning, so if you are already familiar with this ontological position you might want to skip forward to the next section.

Entities, Powers and Systems

Entities are things which ‘make a difference’ in their own right, rather than as mere sums of their parts (Fleetwood, 2005, p. 199). Molecules, individuals and organisations are all entities, even though one may be (partially) comprised of others. Entities may be material (e.g. water), immaterial (e.g. class) or both (e.g. a contract).

Bhaskar differentiates between ‘real essences’ which are the ‘structures or constitutions in virtue of which [a] thing or substance tends to behave the way it does’ (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 209), and ‘nominal essences’ which are ‘those properties the manifestation of which are necessary for the thing to be correctly identified as one of a certain type’ (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 279). Such a distinction enables a separation of the essential generative or enabling processes of an entity and its epiphenomenal features. We may thus identify a book nominally, as paper bound together in a particular way, or in a more sophisticated way in terms of its language, genre, intended audience or purpose, to realise the real essence of the specific book observed.

Entities may also be real in different ways and at different levels. For example, the bogeyman is not materially, but ideationally real: the discourses about him have real effects, not least on the bedtime activities of children and on the writers of children’s fiction. The bogeyman thus exists as a conceptual/cultural schema in some societies, which affects social and material events (such as the production of books and toys). Entities are thus organised hierarchically, in that they exist and have relations at different levels. For example, the entity ‘organisation’ is made up from (among other things) people and resources (broadly defined); people are (partially) constructed of tissue and organs; which are, in turn, made up of cells, and so on.

The relationship between these levels can be usefully conceived in terms of *emergence* (Elder-Vass, 2010), wherein one level is dependent upon but irreducible to the level below. For example, we cannot understand the wetness of water in reference to its components of hydrogen and oxygen, nor can we explain the functioning of an organisation with sole reference to its separate roles, routines and resources. This because each entity has *causal powers* that depend on the relational properties of its parts. These relational properties can be usefully conceived of as *essences*. An essence is ‘what makes something that thing and not something else’ (O’Mahoney, 2011, p. 726). Water is H₂O

and has the power to soak; organisations have directors and the power to employ; money has legal status and has the power to purchase.¹

Ideas about the causal powers of entities are important because change often occurs when the powers of one entity interact with another: water can be heated by fire, teams may elect a leader, and organisations might be bought by other organisations. Such *mechanisms* often transform entities: water might turn into steam, a new leader might change the organisation, and a purchased organisation might be asset-stripped. So, entities emerge and may be transformed (i.e. manifest with new properties and powers) as a result of the interactions of entities and causal powers.

We should note here the different ways in which a power may exist. An entity may *possess* a power simply due to its properties (a government may have some power to increase employment); this power may be *exercised* by the power being triggered (the government takes on more public sector workers); yet this power may or may not be *actualised* (i.e. come to be) because there may be countervailing powers (e.g. private sector employment may have collapsed). The social world is full of powers, the actualisation of which are often retarded by other powers within the *open systems* in which they are located.

It follows that social mechanisms cannot be empirically isolated, as happens in laboratory experiments. As a consequence, critical realists theorise social mechanisms as ‘laminated systems’ (Bhaskar, 1993; Elder-Vass, 2010) ‘whose internal elements are necessarily “bonded” in a multiplicity of structures’ (Bhaskar, 1993, p. 25). Examples might include financialised capitalism, the Russian legal system or the British public sector: whilst these cannot be separated from the rest of society, they comprise systems, mechanisms and entities which can be usefully considered and conceptualised together.

We can now see that any power necessitates the actualisation (manifestation, existence) of at least one mechanism for the potential exercise of that power. For example, the possessed power of an employer to sack a worker implies a mechanism (legal termination of a contract)

by which this occurs. Powers thus depend on mechanisms (such as employment laws) that relate one entity to another. The exercising of powers (the employer’s ability to dismiss employees) results in tendencies (attempts at dismissing employees in the event of absenteeism) which, in the social world, may be manifest in observed patterns of events (employees leaving). However, such event regularities are not constant conjunctions (sometimes workers quit before they are dismissed and the termination of an employment contract may not be legal), and so observation (employees leaving) does not ‘prove’ one thing or another. As we have seen, powers are often unexercised or unactualised, and so investigation is required to explain the *specific* manifestation of events.

This framing is important because it allows a conceptualisation of what could happen, what should happen and what isn’t happening, which gives the researcher prompts for further investigation. Thus, when we observe the unexpected (women dominating in highly paid jobs, global temperatures decreasing) it indicates that there are (perhaps) deficiencies in our current theorisations or methods which need attention. Moreover, as Bhaskar (2008) argues, this reading of events also allows a conceptualisation of absences which accords causal powers: the absence of legislation on worker rights, for example, has real effects (such as on employer behaviour) which empiricist and constructionist accounts of the world might miss. However, knowing such things requires a commitment to a *depth ontology*, which we now turn to.

The Empirical, The Actual, The Real

In the introduction, we saw how critical realism commits to both ontological realism and epistemological relativism, yet the picture is more complicated than this, as critical realism, whilst accepting that actual events do occur, also proposes that these events are caused by real mechanisms that are often invisible to the researcher. This *stratified* or ‘depth ontology’ makes a distinction between the ‘empirical’,

the ‘actual’ and the ‘real’. The empirical is what we perceive to be the case: human sensory experiences and perceptions (we observe a driver approaching a speed camera and slowing down). The ‘actual’ is the events that occur in space and time, which may be different to what we perceive to be the case (we may assume the driver has slowed down before the speed camera when this is not what happened). The real or deep is constituted of the mechanisms and structures which generate (and explain) events, a point which we shall illustrate below.

This stratified conception of causation facilitates a more adequate understanding of how (material and social) powers, which operate in different times and/or locations and/or at different hierarchical levels, are related. As reality is ‘multiply determined’, with no single mechanism determining events (Bhaskar, 1975), multiple causes must be teased out from detailed explorations of the setting. It follows that a key commitment of critical realist research is that there are deeper levels awaiting discovery. Thus, and beyond direct observation, it is also possible to posit various other *potential mechanisms* that may be (in part or whole) neither manifest nor readily observable, but that still have an effect.

To clarify this critical realist jargon, we might continue with the example of the fixed roadside speed camera, which routinely slows down the traffic regardless of whether the camera within it is actually working. A traditional positivist approach might measure the incidence of new speed cameras (working or not) and the changes in speed of cars, and undertake a regression analysis to show, for example, that a positive correlation, they claim, *proves* that cameras cause speed retardation. Whilst the numbers here can be (though are not necessarily) useful, this analysis contains an inadequate or ‘thin’ conceptualisation of cause which focuses on description rather than explanation. Crucially, it misses out on the most complex element in the processes: the human. An alternative, post-structural approach might emphasise the self-disciplining Foucauldian effects of

disciplinary surveillance, and the role such technology has in producing compliant subjects (for example, Fyfe & Bannister, 1996). This perspective can also produce useful insights, but when discourse is over-emphasised, and the self is seen as constructed, then resistance, social structure and the wider historical context can be missed.

A critical realist perspective, however, not only accepts the distinction between the empirical (the appearance of a speed camera) and the actual (a speed camera with no film), but also seeks to discover the (deep) causal mechanisms that relate the appearance of the camera with the person, asking what variety of causal relations must exist in order for the empirical events to occur. This not only opens up a wider variety of interesting phenomena, such as the mind of the driver, the powers of the police and the braking mechanisms of cars, but also helps us understand why things might change. For example, when the camera gets vandalised because people think cameras are simply a mechanism for extorting fees, passing drivers may change their behaviour. The critical realist approach, therefore, can place the speed camera in a number of related, stratified ‘laminated systems’ – which might include both the structural relations of the citizen, the state and the police, as well as the psychological institutionalisation of drivers and their responses (and resistance) to disciplinary techniques – which rely upon the identification of deep causal relations that may be invisible to the researcher focused merely on actual events.

CRITICAL REALIST RESEARCH

An Underpinning Ontology

The example above highlights an obvious limitation of critical realism: it is a metaphysical ontology and (contrary to some writing) does not imply anything about the existence of the self, society, social structures and so on. To achieve a critical realist account of such things, we need to develop and use what

Cruickshank (2003) refers to as ‘domain specific’ theories. These emerge when general critical realism is drawn upon to develop a framework for studying a specific empirical domain, and the consequence is that the theories that are developed, whilst adhering to the principles and language of critical realism, are only implicitly ontological. For example, those studying labour process theory might (and often do) use critical realism as an ‘underlabourer’ to build theories concerning the exploitation or alienation of workers. However, there is nothing in a critical realist ontology which demands such propositions. Indeed, the epistemological relativism inherent in critical realism means that one would expect such theories to be at best approximations of reality, not least because all social theorising involves simplification.

Applied critical realism, therefore, provides an underpinning structure and language to guide good research by asking what the entities, causal powers, dependencies and relations are, but it does not specify what these should be. The task of the researcher, then, is to work out a better and more causally accurate, correct or reliable explanation for observed patterns of events via the development of more adequate (and domain specific) accounts of the powers, entities, mechanisms and relations which created them. However, as we saw with the example of the speed camera, developing such an explanation can be difficult because the powers of entities do not have to be present or even exerted in order to have an effect.

One consequence of both the ‘domain agnosticism’ and stratified nature of critical realism is that it is compatible with a wide array of other theoretical (though not ontological) positions. For example, critical realists are comfortable with the domain level concepts of discourse, identity or materiality (Elder-Vass, 2014; Mutch, 2013), though clearly not with the ontological positions that discourse is everything or that the material is entirely social (e.g. Barad, 2007). This provides critical realists with great opportunities

to re-examine competing ontological positions, which might make important theoretical insights but which are limited by ontological structures. Such approaches have not only led to many critical realist re-readings of concepts such as discourse (Fairclough, 2005), identity (O’Mahoney, 2011) and socio-materiality (Mutch, 2013), but also to claim that theorists such as Foucault and Derrida are more critical realist than post-structuralist (Pearce & Woodiwiss, 2001; Wright, 2004).

Mechanisms, Contexts, Outcomes

In seeking to understand and explain the mechanisms behind empirical and actual events, critical realism is primarily interested in causal explanations – moving from the what to the why. This challenges the researcher, the policy maker or the manager to develop deep understandings of the worlds they inhabit: away from the simplistic certainty of regression analyses, that might show implementing X ‘causes’ Y, and towards an understanding of why different contexts, conditions and aspects of X can cause Y. The key to this enquiry is the ‘mechanism’ and the events that it produces, but the mechanism in an open system cannot be isolated from its context, hence Pawson and Tilly’s (1997) equation, Mechanism + Context = Outcome. In more detail:

Mechanism: how do the properties of one or more entities affect those of others?

Context: what conditions are needed for an entity’s causal mechanisms be to triggered?

Outcomes: what are the empirical manifestations produced by causal mechanisms being triggered in a given context?

The role of context means that, unlike the image promoted by positivists, there are no clear, simple or easy answers in the social world (Fleetwood & Hesketh, 2010). For example, we might find that low-waged service workers working in a call centre can be happy when they work on quality services, have high levels of discretion in their jobs and positively

identify with the values of their work (Jenkins & Delbridge, 2014). The mechanisms that manifested here concern the relational identifications of the workers with the values of their employer and their work. However, Jenkins and Delbridge also make clear that the context of this mechanism was a labour market in which there was limited choice and a family-owned, small and successful business, and so the identified mechanisms may produce different outcomes in different contexts or even within the same company at a different time.

CR Research Design

The centrality of identifying mechanisms to explain *why* things happen means that critical realists put theory first. Thus, the aim of critical realist research design is to produce explanations (theories) about the essences (properties) and exercise of transfactual, hidden and often universal mechanisms. This takes any potential generalisations from the empirical to the theoretical, in contrast to the positivist approach where generalisations are only concerned with an empirical population (Danermark, 2002, p. 77). This distinction is important because theoretical generalisations are more enduring and can be applied through time and space. For example, a theoretical generalisation that capitalism tends to commodify should not only be applicable in all forms of capitalism (including future ones), but when one finds empirical evidence to the contrary it should prompt the researcher to seek reasons which prevent the mechanism being actualised. In contrast, a generalisation that notes only the empirical instances of capitalist commodification has limited explanatory value because it simply identifies the empirical event and says little about why it happens, to what extent and in which circumstances. Moreover, evidence to the contrary simply modifies the generalisation and does not prompt a pursuit of counter-mechanisms.

The importance of CR emphasising ontological questions (what is X? how does it work?)

over epistemological questions (how can we know X?) means that CR is methodologically ecumenical. Indeed, many realists would argue that the emergent stratified nature of social reality means that a wide range of methodological approaches or 'extended methods' is necessary for a richer conceptualisation of the mechanisms at work in the social world. For this reason, CR scholars embrace a range of qualitative research techniques. Our own edited collection (Edwards et al., 2014), which looked at the implications of CR for a range of methods within the field of organisation studies, included chapters on discourse analysis (Sims-Schouten & Riley, 2014), grounded theory (Kempster & Perry, 2014), interviewing (Smith & Elger, 2014), ethnography (Rees & Gatenby, 2014), case studies (Vincent & Wapshott, 2013), comparative case methods (Kessler & Bach, 2014), action research (Ram et al., 2014), and historical and documentary methods (Mutch, 2014). Elsewhere, CR scholars have used observational (Bøllingtoft, 2007), diary-based (Næss & Jensen, 2002) and autoethnographical (Botterill, 2003) methods.

As Ackroyd and Karlsson (2014) have argued, the choice of research design for critical realists very much depends on the position of one's research purpose on two dimensions. The first relates to the focus of research, and ranges from *intensive* research to *extensive* research. Intensive research prioritises qualitative research designs, such as case-studies or action research, where the context is known and the mechanism is unknown (for example, *why are workers happy in this factory?*). Extensive research examines the effect of different contexts on a mechanism, for example by using surveys (see also, Sayer, 1997). Quantitative data can be used to generate taxonomies and is useful more where mechanisms are known (or at least inferred), but the context varies (for example, *in what contexts do 'sophisticated' approaches to HRM result in happier workers?*). Between these two extremes are examples of where the focus of study is on the interaction of mechanisms and contexts.

Table 13.1 Critical realist research designs (amended from Ackroyd and Karlsson 2014)

	<i>Intensive B à Extensive</i>			
	<i>What is the mechanism?</i>	<i>How do context & mechanism typically interact?</i>	<i>How do context & mechanism historically interact?</i>	<i>What is the context?</i>
Detached	Case-study	Comparative case-study	Institutional / historical analysis	Surveys
Engaged	Action research	Intensive realist literature evaluations	Barefoot research	Extensive realist evaluation

A second scale concerns the extent of detachment of the researcher, whether they are simply diagnosing from a distance or whether they are trying to manipulate the mechanism or context under study. In Table 13.1, we amend Ackroyd and Karlsson's categories to re-present eight CR research designs. This provides us with eight research designs that are described and illustrated briefly below.

CR Data Collection Methods

There is little to say about CR methods, because they do not exist. As detailed earlier, CR has a highly ecumenical approach to data collection and holds that methodological choices should 'depend on the nature of the object of study and what one wants to learn about it' (Sayer, 2000, p. 19). Thus, whilst CR work is often based on case-study research using methods such as interviews and ethnography, it has also involved observation, focus groups, literature reviews and surveys. The designs detailed in Table 13.2 will often share methods, and the distinction between methods and designs is not always unambiguous.

One caveat that is rarely explored with either research designs or methods is the extent to which the phenomenon being studied can be isolated. It is true that in the social world this is probably futile, but in many disciplines which are increasingly turning to critical realism, such as psychology (Ponterotto, 2005), the focus of study may be mechanisms which are more capable of being isolated, at least at one level, than others. This raises interesting questions about

the extent to which experimental design may be appropriate, perhaps as part of a mixed methods study. As critical realism is still a relatively nascent topic, we hope to see developments on this and other questions by other researchers.

ANALYTICAL METHOD: ABSTRACTION AND RETRODUCTION

As far as analysis is concerned, whilst both induction and deduction are used in critical realist research, the need to move from the empirical to the real (causal mechanisms) means that the emphasis tends to be on abstraction and retroduction. Abstraction, as in 'taken from' the concrete or empirical, involves one-sidedly representing the different elements of a phenomenon in order to synthesise how they work in combination to affect events (Sayer, 1998). The analytical process involves re-description of findings as a causal mechanism or process between related elements which serves to explain them (see also O'Mahoney & Vincent, 2014). This involves re-describing that which is observed (interviews, observation, documents) in terms of (the abstracted) theory in order to describe the sequence of causation, or the relations between things, that gives rise to observed regularities in the pattern of events. It involves combining observations, often although not inevitably in tandem with theory, to produce the most plausible explanation of the mechanisms that caused the events. For example, a researcher looking at HR practices might

Table 13.2 CR research strategies, explanations and examples

<i>Research Design</i>	<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Case-study	The most common, and arguably most useful, form of CR research. In-depth exploration of a case to abduct causal mechanisms from their empirical manifestations. Cases may range from people to companies to whole economies.	Gouldner (1964); Beynon (1979, 1973); Burawoy (1979)
Action research	Intervention by researchers to explore the workings of a mechanism by triggering it or changing its context.	Cassell and Johnson (2006); Friedman and Rogers (2009); Morgan and Olsen (2008)
Comparative case-study	Exploring how similar mechanisms operate in different contexts.	Delbridge (1998); Taylor and Bain (2003); Kirkpatrick et al. (2005)
Intensive realist literature evaluations.	Builds theories to explain what mechanisms work in different contexts by reviewing the extant literature.	Marchal et al. (2012)
Institutional / historical analysis	Examining causal sequences over time to explore how mechanisms and contexts interact over time, and the conditions for such interaction.	Smith and Meiksins (1995); Clark (2012), Mutch (2007)
Barefoot research	Training / encouraging participants / employees to do their own research.	Lindqvist (1979)
Surveys	Primarily focuses on descriptive statistics (e.g. sampling or population data) to illustrate the empirical consequences or conditions of mechanisms. Occasionally used to prompt explanatory investigations, but in conjunction with other methods.	Cully et al. (1999)
Extensive realist evaluation	Mixed methods: stage one uses qualitative work to identify causal mechanisms. Stage 2 uses statistical techniques to examine how different contexts affect a mechanism.	Kazi (2003); Kazi et al. (2002)

interview a group of workers about their appraisal and seek to explain these data in terms of theory about the disciplinary power of managerial discourses (what is said in the appraisal situation) in the employment relationship, wherein it is theoretically assumed that the bargaining position of the appraisee (worker) is weaker than their appraiser (manager). Here, and if the explanation of the mechanisms is successful, theory and data will be consistently and effectively 'fitted together' in such a way as to render the nature of the mechanism clearer.

Retroduction involves imagining a mechanism, which, if it were real, would account for the phenomena *in question*. In other words, it seeks to ascertain what the world (i.e. the broader context) must be like in order for the phenomena we observe to be as they are and not otherwise (Sayer, 2010). This often involves first identifying patterns over periods of time and in different contexts to creatively ask 'what if?', to identify often hidden causal mechanisms. For example, extending the example used above, we might observe (1) that some managerial discourses are more persuasive than others, and (2) that in certain organisational contexts (opportunity structures, labour markets, etc.) workers are more inclined to accept the managerial version of 'the truth', however this might be constructed. This, in turn, suggests that a number of other causal processes are also at play to affect the mechanism observed, suggesting the opportunity to understand more about the relationship between the mechanisms we observed and the contexts in which they operate.

In order to build better explanations of the interconnections between strata which might explain such variance within a known mechanism, we must either bring in or develop other theoretical resources. For example, we might use comparative analysis to demonstrate that it is those appraisers who are able to transpose the dominant cultural tropes of their appraisees into the appraisal meetings who prove to be the most persuasive. As a result, we might develop a new theory that connects the organisational

outcomes with broader cultural contexts. Alternatively, and drawing on existing theory, we might consider the nature of opportunity structures within the broader labour market in order to explain why it is that, say, managerial trainees and those with an interest in opportunities for further technical training have a greater interest in being complicit with managerial discourses than, say, those with little opportunity for career advancement. In either case, new lines can be drawn between the operation of a mechanism, at one level, and the context(s) within which the mechanism resides.

As different theories emphasise different aspects of mechanisms that are simultaneously implicated in a pattern of events, retroduction implies a commitment to *theoretical pluralism*, at least at the outset of an investigation. Multiple theoretical lenses can be considered for what they tell us about the various and stratified influences that are affecting the things we observe.

Abstraction and retroduction can also be used as part of an *immanent critique* of a competing position in order to develop theorising in a field. This provides a critique from within a theoretical position and identifies contradictions, ambiguities or inconsistencies. It seeks the 'Achilles heel' (Bhaskar & Hartwig, 2010) of an existing theoretical position in order to identify theoretical weaknesses that require further investigation. For example, Archer undertakes an immanent critique of conceptions of the social agent within economics and social-constructionists sociology to demonstrate the need for a new theory about the ways in which humans are conditioned by, but irreducible to, social norms and structures. This then spurs Archer's (2000) investigation and development of a theory of humans which incorporates the notion of morphogenetic cycle and the subject's 'inner dialogue'. In undertaking an immanent critique, critical realist research may seek to ameliorate the flaws they discover by asking what the theory could be like in order to overcome its inconsistencies and re-describing the theoretical tools of the position within an alternative

(in this case, critical realist) theory. For example, O'Mahoney (2011) shows that the anti-essentialist positions of many anti-essentialist scholars are inconsistent with their own practices and theorising. He uses this flaw to redescribe their main theoretical commitments (for example, concerning identity and discourse) within a critical realist ontology.

Thus, when abstraction and retroduction succeed, they offer a new and often unanticipated view of things: what was hitherto unobserved becomes the basis of new understanding. By postulating a new view of the object of study in the light of a new or existing theorisation, a successful realist study, therefore, re-conceptualises the subject and the processes to which it is connected. Finally, it should be noted that many researchers, for simplicity, treat abstraction and retroduction as one movement, often from qualitative data to the best theory that explains the data (Mingers, 2006; Ketokivi and Mantere 2010). As we believe that abstraction necessitates some form of retroduction, and vice versa, we do not disagree with this combination.

AN EXEMPLAR ANALYSIS

One qualitative CR study that uses abstraction, retroduction and multiple theoretical lenses is Vincent (2008). This study wanted to understand more about the way in which public sector organisations procured complex goods from private sector suppliers, and so it came to focus on an exemplar case: a 'strategic Partnership' between Govco (a large and bureaucratic government department) and Futuretech (a multinational software development specialist). This 'Partnership' became the focus of a case-study, and a range of qualitative data collection tools, including interviews, observation and documentary analysis, were used to abduct the Partnership as an inter-organisational mechanism.

Abstraction was used to work out how the organisation functioned, as a mechanism

in itself. The interviews indicated that the partnership was created because Govco was interested in accessing Futuretech's stock of in-house technology and expertise. Futuretech, on the other hand, wanted to make a profit from the arrangement. A contract was agreed, which stipulated (amongst other things) that the cost of IT systems development should halve over five years, with Futuretech benefitting (financially) where performance exceeded these expectations. The analysis came to focus on how this contract was managed, with subsequent interviews, observation and documentary analysis focused on this contractual mechanism.

The data indicated that a group of senior IT experts and managers who constituted the Partnership were employed, by both organisations, to manage the contract. These managers knew a great deal about the technological possibilities, capabilities and susceptibilities of both organisations. They met regularly to define the work Futuretech would deliver and, subsequently, they were responsible for ensuring that it was delivered to contractual targets. As such, the Partnership had a good deal of latitude to decide what 'good performance' looked like (even if most respondents didn't say so). Some, more junior, managers admitted that, as there was no easy yardstick with which to measure time spent developing IT systems, some technologies were much easier to deliver than others. Others hinted that, where performance dipped below contractual expectations, any underperformance could be reconciled against easier-to-deliver work. In the end, contractual targets were consistently delivered, but there was little evidence to confirm whether performance was 'good' or 'bad' (and thus no way to easily work out what the Partnership delivered as a whole).

In some ways, the Partnership appeared to be effective: it hit contractual targets, and IT user surveys showed improved perceptions of performance. In interviews, senior personnel boasted about the cordiality of relations. All were committed to Futuretech making a 'reasonable' profit and had a strong interest in

the contract being a 'success' (future careers depended on it!). However, there was also evidence that performance was less than effective. Some (knowledgeable) respondents complained about the quality of the technologies delivered and suggested that, over time, Futuretech delivered increasingly 'off-the-peg' rather than more complex and challenging 'bespoke' technologies. Ultimately, it is likely to have been more generally recognised that the Partnership was failing to deliver as effectively as it might (the contract was not renewed after its five-year term ended).

In this case, abstraction from qualitative data revealed the Partnership as a set of inter-organisational meetings that negotiated contractual details. In this study, access to the Partnership was good and so abstraction of the basic mechanisms (the Partnership) from the data required little prior theoretical engagement. However, the realists' movement, from the description of the mechanism to an account of the specific outcomes associated with it, also assumed a context in which deeper levels were awaiting discovery. It is explaining these deeper levels that necessitates the use of novel theoretical resources. For example, and from the data, we might have tracked the career interests of the people who constituted the Partnership and abstracted a novel theory about these interests, which resulted in self-serving outcomes. However, such data-abstracted, domain-specific theories can always be deepened. Why did the Partnership have so much latitude to determine its own 'successes'? Why could Futuretech get away with delivering apparently shoddier and less customer-focused technology? Answering these questions involves taking a retroductive steps 'backwards' to ask why the Partnership manifested itself as it did and not otherwise.

At this point, existing theory can be an invaluable tool in developing a deeper understanding of the mechanism observed. As the data were collected, the researchers also trawled the literature to see how others theorised cooperative inter-organisational relationships. Various theories were considered

and combined in the effort to provide a more effective insight into particular outcomes observed in the Partnership. Three theories, in particular, appeared to be useful. These were *transaction cost economics* (TCE), which suggests that inter-organisational relations are affected by the type of product developed and exchanged; *resource dependency theory* (RDT), which suggests that inter-organisational relations are affected by each partner's relative dependency on the other's resources and abilities; and *institutional theory*, which suggests that inter-organisational relations can be affected by broader ideological trends and norm-enforcing mechanisms. There is not space here to do justice to the complexities of these theoretical frameworks or why they were selected. Instead, we explain *how* these theories were incorporated within an explanatory framework for the Partnership.

Each of these theories resonated with different patterns in the data. For example, TCE suggests that where contractual mechanisms govern complex, uncertain, changeable and idiosyncratic tasks and technologies, the actors involved will necessarily have greater autonomy in determining their own ends. Documentary analysis confirmed that technologies were developing quickly within the market and interviews confirmed that benchmarks for good performance were ineffective. TCE, a theory about how market conditions affect contracts, thus helped explain the Partnership's apparent autonomy and rooted this explanation in a specific cause (technological uncertainty within a broader social formation).

Suffice to say, a similar story can be told for RDT, which appeared to account for the increasingly 'off-the-peg' technologies Futuretech apparently delivered. Specifically, as Futuretech assumed responsibilities for developed technologies, knowledge accrued on Futuretech's side of the contract rather than Govco's. As a result, Futuretech's agents became increasingly powerful in asserting their own technological imperative and interests, even if these did not meet Govco's needs exactly. RDT thus contributed to the theoretical

model developed, with data suggesting that Govco (as one entity) became increasingly dependent on Futuretech (as another) over time, and that this may have altered the balance of power negotiations about technologies developed. Again, this theory fits the data.

Finally, institutional theory, which suggests (institutional) mechanisms are conditioned by dominant organising logics that operate across broader social formations, contributed to the explanation of the Partnership's tendency to extol its own successes. At the time of the Partnership's inception, private sector provision was prioritised over public sector provision as a matter of policy prescription – owing to a generalised ideological faith in the relative efficiency of private sector providers (even where transactional considerations suggested this may not actually be the case). In these circumstances, it is unsurprising that few were shouting about the Partnership's failures.

Arguably, this synthesis of existing theory and the qualitative case data generated a better and theoretically informed model of the generative mechanism that more accurately accounted for the specific empirical tendencies observed within the case. It added richness to the explanation of the Partnership by rendering more explicit the causal dynamics that existed between the Partnership and its antecedents, including the material (e.g. technology/resource) and ideational (norms, discourses) phenomena to which it related.

Theoretical models, such as this combination of TCE, RDT and institutionalism, are transferable generalisations that can be reapplied in analyses of similar institutional settings. More specifically, the combination of insights about idiosyncratic technical conditions, mutual resource dependencies and supporting institutional rule systems, which inhered within the Partnership, are likely to be present in cooperative, inter-organisational forms more generally. This model can, then, be used as a basis for building alternative explanations of the particular configuration of contextual determinants that patinas other similar structures. Knowledge obtained about

a single case-study is thus not confined to the boundaries of the case itself, but is theoretically transferable across a class of cases. Thus, the theoretical models we develop through our case-studies, as we explain their peculiarities, also help articulate the specific conditions that makes a class of cases classifiable in terms of their common antecedents. It is this form of theoretical generalisation that qualitative CR researchers should seek to extend and develop.

CONCLUSION

Critical realism provides, in our view, a more serious, consistent and credible alternative to positivism, interactionism, socio-materialism and constructivism, and allows researchers to move beyond the cultural and moral relativism inherent in many of these accounts. Moreover, through its commitment to stratification and emergence, critical realism is entirely capable of incorporating epistemological insights from these competing positions without accepting their ontological flaws. This is because critical realism overcomes the objectivist/subjectivist and qualitative/quantitative dichotomies, because it is methodologically pluralist and inclusive, and because it provides philosophically informed methodologies (abduction and retrodution) for generating new insights.

Yet, critical realism is not without its difficulties. First, as we have shown, it does not (and cannot) generate any specific *domain*-level theorising, other than by ensuring that studies commit to a stratified, emergent account of the social world. Second, it does not prescribe which methods are suitable for investigating which problems. This again is down to the researcher's experience and intuition. Third, in its ontological guise, critical realism is not actually particularly critical. Its commitment to truth does mean that false beliefs and ideologies can be labelled as such, but, in order to *really* emancipate, we must do more than identify the disempowered. As Collier explains:

When it is just a set of false beliefs that enslaves, their replacement by true beliefs is liberation. But the vast bulk of human bondage, misery and repression is not like that. The extension of emancipatory critique from cognitive error to unsatisfied needs makes it clear that false belief is not the only chain that binds us ... unemployed workers, homeless families, bullied wives, tortured prisoners, may all know exactly what would make them free, but lack the power to get it. ... Hence cognitive enlightenment is a necessary, though not a sufficient, condition of their emancipation. (Collier, 1998, p. 461)

Yet some critical realists are working to develop this limitation. Sayer (2011) and others have sought to detail the properties humans possess which imply ethical practices for how they should be treated (see also Nussbaum, 2003; Smith, 2010). CR researchers should therefore be challenged to consider the means required to act on and change the world (see Ram et al., 2014).

Finally, critical realism is relatively difficult to operationalise: many critical realist pieces in sociology and organisation studies are compatible with critical realism, but do not end up detailing a clear set of entities, properties, causal mechanisms, triggers and so on. Others use theorists, such as Archer (2003), to provide an applied critical realist framing concerned with social structure, agency and reflexivity, which is more suited for social research than a pure critical realist ontology. Others, including many Marxists, and Labour Process Theorists, undertake studies which do not mention, but are entirely compatible with, critical realism (see Edwards, 2005). As one prominent theorist recently retorted to one of the authors, 'I don't see why you need to mention critical realism, surely it's just good sociological research!'

And yet, we would retort, good sociological research benefits from having clear analytical targets (indeed, this what makes it an 'ology' in the first place!). As such, critical realism offers a common language for the identification of such targets that does more than appeal to 'common sense'. However, as critical realism is a relatively new position, it

is still developing: making new connections, re-interpreting alternative perspectives, and responding to challenges. The work of Bhaskar (2008) on dialectical critical realism, for example, certainly offers opportunities for novel research which has not yet been incorporated into mainstream social research. As we have seen, this nascence presents challenges to researchers but also offers them opportunities to contribute meaningfully to one of the most important developments in social theory in recent times.

Note

- 1 'Power' here does not concern the sociological concepts of power (such as that detailed by Lukes, 2005), but, instead, the metatheoretical specification of the (potential) of one entity to act upon another (e.g. heat on water; wages on labour markets; competition on innovation). Although we need to be careful when using terms like 'essence' and 'power', it is important to note that without some idea that an entity has one or more essences or powers, it is indistinguishable from anything else.

REFERENCES

- Archer, M. S. 2000. *Being Human: The Problem of Agency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Archer, M. S. 2003. *Structure, Agency and the Internal Conversation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ackroyd, S. & Karlsson, J. C. 2014. 'Critical realism, Research techniques, and Research Designs'. In P. K. Edwards, J. O'Mahoney & S. Vincent (Eds), *Studying Organizations Using critical Realism: A Practical Guide* (pp. 21–45). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Barad, K. 2007. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Beynon, H. 1979. *Working for Ford*. Wakefield: EP Publishing.
- Bhaskar, R. 1975. *A Realist Theory of Science*. London: Routledge.

- Bhaskar, R. 1979. *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press.
- Bhaskar, R. 1993. *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*. London; New York: Verso.
- Bhaskar, R. 1994. *Plato etc.: The Problems of Philosophy and Their Resolution*. London; New York: Verso.
- Bhaskar, R. 2008. *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Bhaskar, R. & Hartwig, M. 2010. *The Formation of Critical Realism: A Personal Perspective*. New York: Routledge.
- Bøllingtoft, A. 2007. 'A critical realist approach to quality in observation studies'. In H. Neergaard & J. Parm (Eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Entrepreneurship* (pp. 23–49). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Botterill, D. 2003. 'An autoethnographic narrative on tourism research epistemologies'. *Loisir et société/Society and Leisure*, 26:1, 97–110.
- Burawoy, M. 1979. *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process Under Monopoly Capitalism*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Casell, C. & Johnson, P. 2006. 'Action research: Explaining the diversity'. *Human Relations*, 59:6, 783–814.
- Collier, A. 1998. 'Explanation and Emancipation'. In M. Archer, R. Bhaskar, A. Collier, T. Lawson & A. Norrie (Eds), *Critical Realism: Essential Readings* (pp. 444–472). London: Routledge.
- Clark, P. 2012. *Organizations in Action: Competition between Contexts*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Cruickshank, J. 2003. *Critical Realism: The Difference it Makes*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Cully, M., Oreilly, A. & Dix, G. 1999. *Britain at Work: As Depicted by the 1998 Workplace Employee Relations Survey*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Danermark, B. 2002. *Explaining Society: Critical Realism in the Social Sciences*. London: Routledge.
- Delbridge, R. 1998. *Life on the Line in Contemporary Manufacturing: The Workplace Experience of Lean Production and the 'Japanese' Model*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Edwards, P. K., O'Mahoney, J. & Vincent, S. 2014. *Studying Organizations Using Critical Realism: A Practical Guide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Edwards, P. K. 2005. 'The Challenging but Promising Future of Industrial Relations: Developing Theory and Method in Context-Sensitive Research', *Industrial Relations Journal*, 36: 264–82.
- Elder-Vass, D. 2010. *The Causal Power of Social Structures: Emergence, Structure and Agency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Elder-Vass, D. 2014. 'Disassembling actor-network theory'. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 45:1, 100–45.
- Fairclough, N. 2005. 'Peripheral vision: Discourse analysis in organization studies: The case for critical realism'. *Organization Studies*, 26:6, 915–39.
- Fleetwood, S. 2005. 'Ontology in organization and management studies: A critical realist perspective'. *Organization*, 12:2, 197–222.
- Fleetwood, S. & Hesketh, A. 2010. *Explaining the Performance of Human Resource Management*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Friedman, V. J. & Rogers, T. 2009. 'There is nothing so theoretical as good action research'. *Action Research*, 7:1, 31–47.
- Fyfe, N. R. & Bannister, J. 1996. 'City watching: Closed circuit television surveillance in public spaces'. *Area*, 28:1, 37–46.
- Gouldner, A. W. 1964. *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy*. New York: Free Press.
- Jenkins, S. & Delbridge, R. 2014. 'In pursuit of happiness: A sociological examination of employee identifications amongst a "happy" call-centre workforce'. *Organization*, 21:6, 867–87.
- Kazi, M. A. F. 2003. *Realist Evaluation in Practice: Health and Social Work*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kazi, M., Blom, B., Moren, S., Perdal, A.-L. & Rostila, I. 2002. 'Realist evaluation for practice in Sweden, Finland and Britain'. *Journal of Social Work Research and Evaluation*, 3:2, 171–86.
- Kempster, S. & Perry, K. 2014. 'Critical realism and grounded theory'. in P. Edwards, J. O'Mahoney & S. Vincent (Eds), *Studying Organisations Using Critical Realism: A Practical Guide* (pp. 86–108). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Kessler, I. & Bach, S. 2014. 'Comparing cases'. In P. Edwards, J. O'Mahoney & S. Vincent (Eds) *Studying Organisations Using Critical Realism: A Practical Guide* (168–84). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ketokivi, M. & Mantere, S. 2010. 'Two strategies for inductive reasoning in organizational research'. *Academy of Management Review*, 35:2, 315–33.
- Kirkpatrick, I., Ackroyd, S. & Walker, R. 2005. *The New Managerialism and Public Service Professions: Change in Health, Social Services and Housing*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lindqvist, S. 1979. 'Dig where you stand'. *Oral History*, 7, 24–30.
- Lukes, S. 2005. *Power: A Radical View*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Marchal, B., van Belle, S., van Olmen, J., Hoérée, T. & Kegels, G. 2012. 'Is realist evaluation keeping its promise? A review of published empirical studies in the field of health systems research'. *Evaluation*, 18:2, 192–212.
- Mingers, J. 2006. *Realising Systems Thinking: Knowledge and Action in Management Science*. New York: Springer.
- Morgan, J. & Olsen, W. 2008. 'Defining objectivity in realist terms: Objectivity as a second-order "bridging" concept part II: Bridging to praxis'. *Journal of Critical Realism*, 7:1, 107–32.
- Mutch, A. 2007. 'Reflexivity and the institutional entrepreneur: A historical exploration'. *Organization Studies*, 28:7, 1123–40.
- Mutch, A. 2013. 'Sociomateriality – Taking the wrong turning?' *Information and Organization*, 23:1, 28–40.
- Mutch, A. 2014. 'History and documents in critical realism'. In P. Edwards, J. O'Mahoney & S. Vincent (Eds), *Studying Organisations Using Critical Realism: A Practical Guide* (pp. 223–40). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Næss, P. & Jensen, O. B. 2002. 'Urban land use, mobility and theory of science: Exploring the potential for critical realism in empirical research'. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 4:4, 295–311.
- Nussbaum, M. 2003. *Upheavals of Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Mahoney, J. 2011. 'Embracing essentialism: A realist critique of resistance to discursive power'. *Organization*, 19:6, 723–41.
- O'Mahoney, J. & Vincent, S. 2014. 'Critical realism as an empirical project: A beginner's guide'. In P. Edwards, J. O'Mahoney & S. Vincent (Eds), *Putting Critical Realism into Practice: A Guide to Research Methods in Organization Studies* (pp. 1–20). London: Oxford University Press.
- Pawson, R. & Tilley, N. 1997. *Realistic Evaluation*. London: Sage.
- Pearce, F. & Woodiwiss, T. 2001. 'Reading Foucault as a realist'. In J. López & G. Potter (Eds), *After Postmodernism: An Introduction to Critical Realism*. London: Athlone.
- Ponterotto, J. G. 2005. 'Qualitative research in counseling psychology: A primer on research paradigms and philosophy of science'. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52:2, 126–136.
- Ram, M., Edwards, P., Jones, T., Kiselichev, A. & Muchenje, L. 2014. 'Pulling the levers of agency: Implementing critical realist action research'. In P. Edwards, J. O'Mahoney & S. Vincent (Eds), *Studying Organisations Using Critical Realism: A Practical Guide* (pp. 205–22). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rees, C. & Gatenby, M. 2014. 'Critical realism and ethnography'. In P. Edwards, J. O'Mahoney & S. Vincent (Eds) *Studying Organisations Using Critical Realism: A Practical Guide* (pp. 132–47). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sayer, A. 1997. 'Essentialism, social constructionism, and beyond'. *Sociological Review*, 45:3, 453–87.
- Sayer, A. 1998. 'Abstraction: A realist interpretation'. In M. Archer, R. Bhaskar, A. Collier, T. Lawson & A. Norrie (Eds), *Critical Realism: Essential Readings* (pp. 120–43). London: Routledge.
- Sayer, A. 2000. *Realism and Social Science*. London: Sage.
- Sayer, A. 2010. *Method in Social Science: Revised 2nd Edition*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Sayer, A. 2011. *Why Things Matter to People: Social Science, Values and Ethical Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sims-Schouten, W. & Riley, S. 2014. 'Employing a form of critical realist discourse analysis for identity research: An example from women's talk of motherhood, childcare, and employment'. In P. Edwards, J. O'Mahoney & S. Vincent (Eds), *Studying Organisations*

- Using Critical Realism: A Practical Guide* (pp. 46–65). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, C. 2010. *What is a person?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Smith, C. & Elger, T. 2014. 'Critical realism and interviewing subjects'. In P. Edwards, S. Vincent & J. O'Mahoney (Eds), *Using Critical Realism to Study Organisations* (pp. 109–31). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, C. & Meiksins, P. 1995. 'System, society and dominance effects in cross-national organisational analysis'. *Work, Employment & Society*, 9:2, 241–67.
- Taylor, P. & Bain, P. 2003. '"Subterranean work-sick blues": Humour as subversion in two call centres'. *Organization Studies*, 24:9, 1487–509.
- Vincent, S. 2008. 'A transmutation theory of inter-organizational exchange relations and networks: Applying critical realism to analysis of collective agency'. *Human Relations*, 61:6, 875–99.
- Vincent, S. & Wapshott, R. 2013. 'Critical realism and the organizational case study: A guide to discovering institutional mechanisms'. In P. Edwards, J. O'Mahoney & S. Vincent (Eds), *Putting Critical Realism into Practice: A Guide to Research Methods in Organization Studies* (pp. 148–167). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wright, C. 2004. 'Limited incorporation or sleeping with the enemy: Reading Derrida as a critical realist'. In J. Joseph & J. Roberts (Eds), *Realism Discourse and Deconstruction* (pp. 201–17). London: Routledge.

Ethnomethodology

Andrea Whittle

INTRODUCTION

What is ethnomethodology? Despite sounding a bit like one, ethnomethodology is not in fact a ‘methodology’. It is not a research method like semi-structured interviews or questionnaires. Nor is it really a ‘theory’ as such. It is probably best described as a different ‘perspective’ in sociology, or perhaps even a ‘paradigm of enquiry’ in its own right (Button, 1991). The term was coined by an influential sociologist called Harold Garfinkel. Let’s break the term ethnomethodology down. ‘Ethno’ comes from the Greek word *ethnos* and means ‘people’. These people could be organized into a variety of different types of groupings, large or small, formal or informal: a crowd, a sports team, a large multi-national corporation or even a whole network of professional organizations that make up a social institution such as the legal system. The key thing is that the people in the group share, recognize and employ similar ‘methods’ to do whatever they do, such as playing a sports

game, operating a global business or upholding the law. The term ‘methodology’, then, refers to the methods or procedures that competent members of that social group use to go about ‘organizing’ themselves. Put simply, then, ethnomethodology is the study of the practical methods through which members of a particular social group accomplish ‘organization’. The relevance for business and management studies is now immediately obvious: businesses, and the people that manage them, are centrally concerned with getting a group of people *organized* to achieve some kind of common task or goal.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain what ethnomethodology is, how it differs from other qualitative approaches, what influence it has had on social science more generally, and business and management studies more specifically, and its implications for questions of methodology and research design. The first section gives some background on the history and origins of ethnomethodology and explains some of its core concepts. The

second section looks at what it means to study organizations – the usual focus of research in business and management studies – from an ethnomethodological perspective. The third section reviews the contributions that have been made from using ethnomethodology in a variety of business settings: starting with the early classic ethnomethodological studies of institutional settings such as law enforcement and public welfare institutions, moving on to more contemporary settings known as ‘workplace studies’ and also more recent studies of market exchanges. The final section examines the promises, challenges and practicalities of the research methods associated with ethnomethodology, with its emphasis on close empirical analysis of real-time interaction as it happens in real-life settings through observational methods of various kinds.

GARFINKEL, ETHNOMETHODOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF SOCIAL ORDER

Garfinkel was one of the most original – and controversial – thinkers in sociology. The publication of his book in 1967, *Studies in ethnomethodology*, divided academic opinion. Ethnomethodology attempts to rethink the fundamental premise of mainstream sociology: the existence of ‘social facts’ such as rules, norms and values. Ethnomethodology takes these social facts used within mainstream functionalist social science to explain social action, such as ‘social rules’ or ‘social norms’, and instead treats them as endogenous accomplishments of knowledgeable members of a social group (Leiter, 1980; Handel, 1982; Button, 1991; Coulon, 1995; Francis & Hester, 2004; ten Have, 2004). In other words, what others take as pre-given external social ‘facts’ and ‘forces’ that make members of a social group ‘orderly’ and ‘organized’, ethnomethodology takes as things that people have to *produce* in an ongoing social process. Ethnomethodology is the term that the field’s founding thinker, Harold Garfinkel, used to

describe the study of ‘the work of fact production *in flight*’ (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 79, emphasis added).

From its inception, ethnomethodology was never a unified field. Even today it is best described as a splintered set of related sub-fields (Button, 1991). One of the most significant relationships is that between ethnomethodology (EM) and conversation analysis (CA), the latter field emerging from the work of Harvey Sacks. Some people use the term EM/CA to highlight this link (Llewellyn & Hindmarsh, 2010). This chapter will focus primarily on ethnomethodology, but interested readers are invited to consult Drew and Heritage (2013) for an overview of CA.

Ethnomethodology emerged as a critique of the structural functionalist sociology of Talcott Parsons – under whom Garfinkel studied at Harvard University in the 1940s. Functionalism sought to identify the social structures, facts, variables and forces that are presumed to create social order. The term social order refers to any kind of cooperative, predictable and stable set of social relations that exhibit some kind of orderliness. This could be the kind of social rules, norms and values that are presumed to emanate from so-called ‘macro’ institutions such as the State, the education system or religion, which are understood to govern society writ large. It could also be the so-called ‘micro’ social order of forming a queue. However, for ethnomethodology, this distinction between micro and macro is a misnomer (Hilbert, 1990), as all social action is endogenously generated, and the classification of ethnomethodology as a ‘micro’ approach has been strongly rejected (Garfinkel & Rawls, 2002). Thus, ethnomethodology does not ignore social structure or indeed organizational structure; rather, it re-specifies it as an ongoing accomplishment of members (Button, 1991) – what Boden (1994) refers to as ‘organization-in-action’.

Ethnomethodology addresses the same ‘problem’ or ‘topic’ as sociology – namely, how social order and structure is generated or transformed – but ‘turns it on its head’. Rather

than seeing people as ‘judgemental dopes’ or ‘dupes’ who are ‘pushed and pulled’ by social facts – such as a social rule, norm or value – it views social order as the ongoing, artful and knowledgeable *accomplishment* of members (Garfinkel, 1967). Drawing on the phenomenology of Alfred Schutz (1953), Garfinkel was interested in how members used their stock of knowledge and reasoning procedures about the social world to produce the ‘social facts’ that other sociological theories treat as unproblematic. Systems of order and organization are of course how business and management practices of various kinds get done, but this order is now understood as ‘an ongoing achievement of member’s methods for producing it – rather than the result of structures, cultures, habits, routines, power, or interests, as other theories assume’ (Rawls, 2008, p. 709).

What is an ‘Ethno-method’?

It might be useful to take a simple example. Llewellyn and Hindmarsh (2010) use the example of customers forming a queue – a social practice commonplace in retail businesses and a very basic unit of social organization commonplace across Western society.¹

As a basic form of social organization, the queue is only witness-able, and thus join-able, because people are able to recognise, and orient their conduct to, ‘what queues look like’ and ‘what queuing practically involves’. (Llewellyn & Hindmarsh, 2010, p. 4)

What are the ethno-methods we routinely use to recognize that a line of people is, in fact, a queue? And what are the ethno-methods we use to display to others that we have joined it? These ethno-methods involve all the taken-for-granted social *knowledge* and associated forms of *reasoning* that we have about queues, such as:

Where the ‘front’ and ‘back’ is, and which to join;
Whether to face other people’s front or back;
How to stand not-too-far and not-too-close to the person in front;

How to signal to others you are waiting to pay and not doing something else;
And so on.

In other words, we have our own ‘social theory’ of queues that we put to use in order to recognize and join one. In essence, the people that sociologists study are also sociologists of a kind: they are ‘folk sociologists’ (Wieder, 1974) or ‘practical sociologists’ (Benson & Hughes, 1983), using their knowledge of the social world to accomplish their practical tasks, such as queuing or running a business. Sociology – knowledge of the social world – is not just something that academics in sociology departments of universities know about. It is something that we are all competent in, as members of society.

Ethnomethodology is interested in studying these ‘theories-in-use’ that constitute actual organizing processes (such as queueing, or running a business), not in replacing these with their own (supposedly more complete or accurate) academic theory. As an empirical programme of research, this means studying actual scenes as they unfold, in real time, in order to identify the kinds of knowledge and reasoning – the ‘ethno-methods’ – that enable people to organize themselves to accomplish some kind of joint activity. The world of ‘business’ is only possible because people have methods for accomplishing the activities involved – a sales pitch, a strategy presentation, a recruitment interview, a performance appraisal – and ethnomethodology seeks to study empirically what these methods are and how they are used to get that business activity done. It asks the deceptively simple question: how do members make sense of their social world? As Llewellyn (2008, p. 767) puts it, ‘the question of what should be inferred from specific expressions, utterances and bodily movements is a problem – not for analysts – but for members’. The task for the ethnomethodologist, then, is to undertake systematic and fine-grained studies of how members solve these ‘problems’ in order to produce order and organization in various social settings – including formal business organizations of different kinds.

Key Concepts in Ethnomethodology: Indexicality, Reflexivity and the Documentary Method

The example of forming a queue illustrates a number of central ethnomethodological constructs (see Garfinkel, 1967): *indexicality* (developed from earlier uses in linguistics), *reflexivity* and the *documentary method of interpretation* (a concept first developed by Mannheim, 1952). The term *indexicality* originates in linguistics and, within linguistics, it is used to refer to certain words which mean different things depending on the context that they 'index' (think of how an index in the back of a book 'points to' a page location). The word 'they', for instance, derives its sense from particular group that is being 'indexed' or 'pointed to' in that particular context. Ethnomethodology extends this by proposing that *any social action* – not just certain words but any utterance, any gesture, or indeed any kind of socially recognizable action – only 'makes sense' through inferences about what the action 'indexes' or 'points to' in that particular context. A cough is a good example: it can be taken to 'index' a (not socially meaningful) physical act of clearing one's throat, or – done in a particular way by a particular person in a particular context – can be read as 'indexing' disagreement, a desire to interject or a signal to stop what you are saying or doing for some reason.

The *documentary method of interpretation* refers to the circular process through which each 'appearance' of social action we encounter is made sense of as 'documenting', 'indexing' or 'pointing to' an underlying pattern or 'typification', the latter concept taken from the phenomenology of Schutz (1953). Think of the appearance as the 'here and now' immediate scene you have just encountered (e.g. an utterance, a gesture or a cough) and the pattern as how this is connected to the 'larger social scene' (Leiter, 1980, p. 171) – something that is an enduring, typical and recurring aspect of the social world (like a norm, rule, role, motive, social type and so

on). Moreover, because the 'pattern' itself is derived from collecting together these 'appearances', this is an ongoing cycle of 'pattern-making'. The term *reflexivity*, then, refers to the inherently circular nature of this process of making sense of particular appearances through reference to wider patterns and simultaneously creating these self-same patterns through collections of appearances. In the queuing example, an appearance in a shop of a person standing still, standing close to another person (who is also standing still) and each person looking at the other person's back would routinely be made sense of as 'documenting' or 'indexing' the pattern 'a queue'. And we use the pattern 'queue' to understand what we have just seen an 'appearance' of. Both elaborate each other. Reflexivity is the term used by ethnomethodologists for this process of mutual elaboration. Of course, should something about the immediate 'here and now' scene change – the person turns around or walks off, for example – a different 'pattern' would probably be applied: namely, 'person shopping'.

The appearance of stability and orderliness, in everyday life as well as formal business organizations, is therefore built from the continuous use of member's common-sense *knowledge* of what is happening and common-sense *reasoning* about what they should do. Hence, ethnomethodology seeks to study the 'stock of knowledge' and 'reasoning procedures' – or what Cicourel (1973, p. 52) alternatively calls 'interpretive procedures' – that makes social organization possible. Maintaining something as simple as a queuing system therefore requires constant, albeit largely imperceptible and predominantly unconscious, effort and activity. It is what Rawls (2008, p. 701) refers to as the 'constant mutual orientation' to unfolding scenes of action. In short, what appears to the social scientist as a stable object of analysis – a 'rule' or a 'norm' – belies a continuous process of social fact production, and it is this process that ethnomethodology seeks to study.

THE ETHNOMETHODOLOGICAL STUDY OF ORGANIZATION

What implications does an ethnomethodological perspective have on the approach to researching formal organizations – the topic of study for business and management studies? Ethnomethodology rejects the idea that organizations – or indeed any other social phenomenon – can be understood as ‘entities’ with various ‘attributes’ that are amenable to analysis with a cause-and-effect logic. Therefore, it does not see things like organizational structures, job attributes, rules, norms or values as ‘input variables’ that can be measured as predictors of organizational outcomes, such as employee engagement, firm performance, level of innovation or sources of competitive advantage. Within business and management studies, terms such as organizational structure or culture are typically listed as an ‘attribute’ of an organization, and typically treated as a variable that either causes other things to happen, or is itself a causal output of another variable. Sometimes these ‘facts’ and ‘factors’ are represented visually as a word in a box, with an arrow arising from it or pointing to it, as if to indicate that they are objects that have properties that do things, or can have things done to them – in the same way that, say, water has the property of being able to be heated to produce steam. The social process that is ‘organization’ is treated as a ‘thing’, and presumed to have ‘attributes’ like a structure and a culture, in the same way that an office block as a physical object can be said to have attributes like a particular height or number of floors.

Bittner (1974, p. 73) explains how ethnomethodology seeks instead to study how people’s common-sense and taken-for-granted reasoning enables the rational structures (or what he calls the ‘formal scheme’) of bureaucracy to operate:

one is confronted with a rich and ambiguous body of background information that normally competent members of society take for granted as

commonly known. ... [This] information enters into that commonplace and practical orientation to reality which members of society regard as ‘natural’ when attending to their daily affairs.

Hence, it is through their ‘everyday mundane knowledge and reasoning procedures’ that organizational members “‘make sense of’ and ‘act on’ the situations in which they are involved’ (Samra-Fredericks & Bargiela-Chiappini, 2008, p. 660). The formal schemes of organizations – their rules, hierarchies, guidelines, procedures, plans and instructions – do not simply push and pull members into compliance, as if working as invisible background forces. Rather, they rely on the knowledge and reasoning of members regarding when, and how, they should apply. Bittner uses the term ‘gambit of compliance’ to describe the ways in which competent members find in the formal scheme the means for doing whatever needs to be done, connecting an infinite variety of actual circumstances to instances of ‘rule compliance’, making rules do things that could never be predicted from their abstracted written form. As a result:

problems referred to the scheme for solution acquire through this reference a distinctive meaning that they should not otherwise have. Thus the formal organizational designs are schemes of interpretation that competent and entitled users can invoke in yet unknown ways whenever it suits their purposes. The varieties of ways in which the scheme can be invoked for information, direction, justification, and so on, without incurring the risk of sanction, constitute the scheme’s methodical use. (Bittner, 1974, p. 76, emphasis in original)

The point is not that organizational members ‘misbehave’, and should be more strictly controlled to comply with formal instructions. The point is that this is precisely *how* organizing is possible. Literal, grammatical readings of rules would threaten to bring organizations to a halt without the competence of members in supplying their ‘rich and ambiguous body of background information’ (Bittner, 1974, p. 73). Those applying rules ‘literally’ could actually expect to be sanctioned for such behaviour.

For Bittner and other ethnomethodologists, then, ‘the task of deciding the correspondence between schemas and actualities is one that should be transferred from the sociological theories back to the workplace participants who operate with those schematics’. (Sharrock, 2012, p. 22). As Gephart (1978, p. 558) argues, ‘members must work to define activities as falling within the organizational scheme. As members confront practical problems, they invoke the organization as a scheme furnishing solutions, but this scheme is reconstructed, modified and negotiated continuously to fit the practical problems at hand’. This continuous *work* of making sense of organizational schemes of various kinds – both formal prescriptions and informal ‘ways of doing things’, both ‘macro’ aspects of broad institutional fields and ‘micro’ aspects of immediate work groups – means that they cannot be understood as stable ‘variables’, but must instead be understood as *social and interpretative processes*.

BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES: ETHNOMETHODOLOGICAL INSIGHTS

This section will provide a brief overview of how ethnomethodology has been used to generate insights into how businesses and other kinds of formal organizations work – both in its ‘home’ discipline of sociology as well as in business, management and organization studies. It might be helpful to the reader who wants to delve into some existing studies that have drawn on ethnomethodology, to get inspiration for designing their own study.

Right from its very inception in the 1960s and throughout the decades that followed, ethnomethodologists have been interested in studying not only informal social interaction but also the work of, and in, formal organizational settings. Classic early studies of the ‘business’ of organizations include:

Coroners tasked with deciding the cause of death when presented with a dead body (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 11–18);
Police officers detecting crimes and dealing with criminals (Sudnow, 1965; Bittner, 1967; Meehan, 1986);
Case-workers in a welfare agency assessing benefit claimants (Zimmerman, 1969);
Staff in a half-way house for rehabilitating offenders working with ex-convicts (Wieder, 1974);
Jurors, lawyers and judges doing their work of upholding ‘justice’ in the criminal justice system (Garfinkel, 1967, Chapter 4; Cicourel, 1968; Atkinson & Drew, 1979; Pollner, 1987);
Scientists at work in a laboratory (Garfinkel et al., 1981; Lynch, 1993).

Interestingly, almost all of the early studies were in formal ‘organizations’ of some sort, with some kind of ‘business’ to conduct (whether for-profit or not) and formal structures, regulations and rules concerning how they should operate.

More recent work has set about explicating the ethno-methods employed to accomplish all kinds of business operations and work tasks. The collection of studies in the book edited by Garfinkel (1986) entitled *Ethnomethodological studies of work* began to unpack the locally produced orders of work that existing studies of work all relied upon, but typically ignored. The term ‘Workplace Studies’ began to be used as a label to describe ethnomethodological studies that sought to reveal the methods that organizational members use to make coordinated action possible by interacting with other people, spaces, artefacts and machines of various kinds. Many of the influential studies involved technological artefacts of some kind, and work in this field often focused on ‘computer supported cooperative work’. Suchman’s (1987) early ground-breaking work on human–machine interaction challenged the dominant thesis that plans – or for that matter any formal system of instructions or rules – are what guides conduct, using the example of an expert system designed for photocopiers. Julian Orr (1996) also draws on ethnomethodological

inspiration in his study of photocopier repair technicians, showing the inadequacy of even the best instruction manual given the tacit knowledge required to 'read' the machines. Button and Sharrock's (1998) study of a large-scale technology project in a multinational company shows how members of the project team designed their actions to be organizationally accountable.

Suchman (1993) later went on to show how various digital displays and controls in air-traffic control centres are used to accomplish the organization of flight paths. Christian Heath, Jon Hindmarsh and Paul Luff took up a similar project in their study of the use of information systems in a variety of organizational settings, most notably the work of London Underground control rooms (Heath & Luff, 2000) and train drivers (Heath et al., 1999). More recently, Neyland (2006) explored how CCTV operators make decisions about what the images on screens mean and what actions should be taken – such as calling the police – based on their reasoning about the motive, intent and moral standing of different categories of person. This body of work within 'Workplace Studies' has also found many practical applications, particularly in the design of human–computer interfaces and information systems (Luff et al., 2000). In addition to technological artefacts and material environments, ethnomethodological studies have also shed light on how business gets done with texts, graphs and documents of various kinds. One of Garfinkel's original studies was of clinical records in an outpatient psychiatric clinic and how seemingly 'bad' records may fulfil other 'good' organizational functions because of the way they were created for potential future readers (Garfinkel, 1967, Chapter 6). Zimmerman's (1969) study of document-use by welfare claim assessors also showed how documents come to make sense – and serve as a basis for inference and decision-making – through the bureaucrat's social knowledge of who or what created them and for what purposes.

For ethnomethodology, organizing occurs through the production of 'accounts' of various

kinds, whether these are oral or written, linguistic or numerical, verbal or non-verbal. Accounts do not describe 'the facts of the matter', they produce them. Documents of various kinds, such as strategy texts, management accounts or financial reports, therefore require study within the *social interactions* through which they are made to make sense (Watson, 2009). Heath & Luff (1996) show how medical records relied upon the background reasoning shared by doctors to make inferences about the 'facts' concerning the patient. Recent work in Rouncefield & Tolmie's (2011) book *Ethnomethodology at work* considers how people in organizational settings produce numbers that transform the organization into a 'calculable' entity (Hughes, 2011), how activities are rendered intelligible in relation to formal plans (Randall & Rouncefield, 2011), how meetings are organized around documents and artefacts such as agendas, projectors and spreadsheets (Hughes et al., 2011), how documents – both paper-based and digital – are used for mundane coordination and decision-making (Hartswood et al., 2011), and how various texts are 'read' and made sense of in situ (Rooksby, 2011). Documents of various kinds are also important in the collection of studies in Llewellyn and Hindmarsh's (2010) book *Organization, interaction and practice*. Samra-Fredericks (2010) study shows how strategic plans are put to work in business meetings, and Moore et al. (2010) examine how apparently simple order forms enable the coordination of dispersed organizational activities.

Ethnomethodology has influenced studies of how those formally tasked with managing or leading organizations get their job done. An early paper by Gephart (1978) studied how a sense of 'crisis' was constructed during a committee meeting that enabled the 'status degradation' of a current leader and succession to a new leader to be accomplished. Housley (2003) examined how critical decisions about social care and welfare are made when 'expertise' from different professionals is brought together in multi-disciplinary

teams. Work by Samra-Fredericks on strategic decision-making and leadership has shown how boardroom influence is accomplished (Samra-Fredericks, 2000), how managers attempt to shape strategic direction (Samra-Fredericks, 2003), how emotions and rationality are intertwined in leadership talk (Samra-Fredericks, 2004), and how power effects are constituted through everyday interaction (Samra-Fredericks, 2005). Iszatt-White (2010, 2011) has developed insights into how leaders go about influencing others at work. Bolander and Sandberg (2013) draw on ethnomethodology to examine the reasoning procedures used by managers and HR professionals to make recruitment decisions following job interviews. Llewellyn and Spence (2009) and Llewellyn (2010) have delved into the job interview itself, exploring how the interviewer and interviewee mutually oriented to, and thereby produced, the 'recruitment interview'. As an approach to studying 'sensemaking', ethnomethodology is also one of the key influences in Karl Weick's (1969, 1995) influential theory of organizational sensemaking. Bob Gephart's work in particular has been influential in advancing the more ethnomethodological 'version' of sensemaking in business and management studies, through studies of sensemaking in a succession battle (Gephart, 1978), crisis sensemaking following environmental disasters (Gephart, 1984, 1993) and how statistics are made sense of in and by organizations (Gephart, 1988, 2006).

Finally, a small but growing body of ethnomethodological work has started to emerge examining the accomplishment of market exchanges. Here, the 'material' consequences of members' ethno-methods for coordinating action are often most visible, as studies trace the consequences of interactions for the exchange of money for goods or services. These studies pose questions such as: how are markets constructed through interactional practices of displaying, recognizing, evaluating, comparing and valuing goods and services? Clark and Pinch (2010) show

how shoppers in a retail store attempted to elicit, or evade, the attention of salespeople, even before a conversation about a 'sale' had begun. Heath and Luff (2010) demonstrate how deceptively simple actions, such as the nod of a head, are produced and recognized to accomplish the order of bidding in a fine art and antiques auction. Llewellyn (2011) examines how a 'gift exchange' is established when people offer to 'pick up the bill' for another person, such as a friend or family member. Another study by Llewellyn of a street salesman showed how, in a matter of seconds, a market exchange was transformed into a gift exchange through the use of speech, gesture and bodily position (Llewellyn, 2011a). Llewellyn and Hindmarsh (2013) also coin the term 'inferential labour' to describe the importance of the taken-for-granted but essential work that service workers undertake in 'sorting' their customers of various kinds to establish relevant 'facts' about them, such as their age or employment status. This emerging body of ethnomethodological work on economic exchange shows great potential for recovering the activities that are 'glossed' in disciplines such as marketing, finance and economics, which often trade on the idea of 'facts' such as 'markets', 'buyers' and 'sellers' without seeking to uncover the social practices ('ethno-methods') through which these processes are created *as* facts.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH METHODS

What are the 'research methods' best suited to studying these 'ethno-methods' used in business and management settings? For researchers studying 'organizations' of various kinds, ethnomethodology invites us to look for very different things compared to conventional, positivistic styles of research. Ethnomethodological studies of organization do not seek to measure 'variables' relating to the organization or its members. Even the

term 'organization' itself is viewed as an unhelpful abstraction, as it treats a social process as if it were a stable 'thing' (Rawls, 2008). An ethnomethodological analysis would examine how the appearance of stability of 'an organization' relies upon ongoing *organizing* work: the 'constant attention and competent use of shared methods of organizing action for its achievement' (Rawls, 2008, p. 702). In methodological terms, studying this organizing process should involve *close observation of people going about their everyday work*, perhaps with the aid of some kind of recording technology that would enable these organizing processes to be slowed down and subject to repeated analysis (Llewellyn & Hindmarsh, 2010). Hence, observation is the central 'research method' used in ethnomethodological studies. This can involve gathering *primary* data – your own records of what happened in the form of field notes or recordings, or, particularly where this is not possible or practical, gathering *secondary* data – existing records produced by the organization being studied (documents, websites, data records, etc.). Gephart's (1984, 1993) studies of publicly available data, such as transcripts of official hearings and reports by investigatory bodies following an environmental disaster, is a good example of the latter approach.

What do the myriad of ethnomethodological studies detailed in the previous section have in common in terms of research methods? They share in common a close attention to the details of how social reality is produced as members generate and exchange accounts (oral or written, linguistic or numerical, verbal or non-verbal) of their social reality. This means studying organization 'as it happens' (Boden, 1990), not as it is retrospectively recounted or rationalized, or how it is translated into inscriptions designed for the researcher (interview accounts, survey questions, diaries, etc.). As a basic methodological requirement, then, an ethnomethodological study needs to use research methods that enable the researcher to identify how a particular

sequence of real-time, organized action is accomplished by observing it in some way *as it unfolds*. It would also ideally be informed by deep immersion in the field site(s) that enables 'an embodied experience of the work in question' (Rawls, 2008, p. 711).

Such deep immersion could mean *participant* observation – quite literally training to become competent in doing the business activity and then actually taking part in the activity with those you are studying. Particularly where the knowledge and reasoning procedures are more specialized and technical rather than 'common knowledge', this enables the researcher to *identify* and *understand* the ethno-methods that are used to 'do business' in that setting. Ethnomethodologists sometimes refer to this as the 'unique adequacy requirement', in which the researcher must have 'adequate' mastery of the setting under study 'as a precondition for making ethnomethodological observations and descriptions' (Lynch, 1993, p. 274; see also Rawls, 2008; Rouncefield & Tolmie, 2011). The study would also ideally – should access be possible and practical – be accompanied by audio- and/or video-recording that enables activity to be later 'slowed down' and 'repeated' during the analysis process (Llewellyn & Hindmarsh, 2010). Social interactions often happen so quickly, and in such 'un-noticed' ways, that a researcher has little time to notice or capture their detailed features in a notepad, so technology can help by making a permanent record that can be scrutinized and replayed multiple times.

As a 'qualitative' approach, ethnomethodology does not mean shunning all interest in quantification *per se*. However, the ethnomethodological researcher does not seek to turn their various forms of data – tape-recordings, video-recordings, field notes, documents, etc. – *into* numbers. Rather, an ethnomethodological researcher would seek to study how forms of quantification and calculation are *used* by members of a social group or formal organization to accomplish some business or management activity, such

as producing an accounting spreadsheet (Hughes, 2011) or conducting a customer satisfaction survey (Gephart, 1988).

The scope of empirical settings that can be studied using an ethnomethodological approach is vast. No setting is in principle ‘out of bounds’, providing sufficient access can be granted to study the ethno-methods being used in real-time as it unfolds. Researchers in the field of business and management studies could use ethnomethodology to study how people working in businesses design and sell their goods and services to customers, whether through traditional retail settings or through the Internet, thereby contributing to knowledge in the field of *Marketing*. Research could be conducted on how people organize the flow of materials or information within the organization during the production process, and how goods or services are shipped to customers or end users, thereby contributing to knowledge in fields such as *Logistics*, *Operations Management* and *Information Systems*. Studies could also be conducted of how leaders and managers get their job done – hiring and firing, making strategic decisions, managing change and innovation, gathering and using management information, and managing people and processes – thereby generating contributions to *HRM*, *Leadership and Strategic Management*. The social process through which businesses are created, how they grow and how they innovate would also enable insights into *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*. *Accounting and Finance* are also ripe fields of inquiry, given the potential to study how financial data and accounting information is created and used in business settings. Indeed, studies in many of these fields have already been listed in the previous section above.

Like other qualitative approaches such as ethnography,² ethnomethodology is interested in studying the phenomena in the environments in which they naturally occur (Gephart, 2004). That means avoiding ‘artificial’ or contrived set-ups, which do not happen as part of the normal activity of that

organization, such as interviews, surveys or experiments designed purely for the purposes of research that the organization does not normally undertake themselves.³ This means a different approach to research methods, such as semi-structured interviews, life history interviews, focus groups, visual methods, open-ended questionnaires, or diary studies. Other ‘mainstream’ approaches to research typically get their participants to undertake these things as a way of gathering ‘data’ about them and the organizations they work for. Ethnomethodologists think this tells us little about the ethno-methods that members use to accomplish their work. These methods are more likely to tell us about the ethno-methods – the common-sense stock of knowledge and reasoning procedures – that people use to accomplish ‘being interviewed by a researcher about my work’ or ‘selecting a Likert scale response on a questionnaire survey about my work’. Instead, the ethnomethodological researcher would study where, how and when these various kinds of ‘research methods’ are used in organizations as part of their ordinary business practices, in order to get some kind of ‘business’ done. For example, earlier I described how ethnomethodologists have studied how recruitment interviews (Llewellyn, 2010) or welfare claimant interviews (Zimmerman, 1969) are accomplished. The researchers did not conduct qualitative interviews with the people involved *about* their experiences of going for job interviews, or applying for welfare benefits. Rather, the researchers *observed the real-time practices* (‘ethno-methods’) used to accomplish the organizational activity of job interviews and welfare claim assessments.

Having collected their data through various forms of observation of social practices, what kinds of claims do ethnomethodological researchers make from their data? It might be useful to finish this section with some key points about what ‘doing an ethnomethodological study’, as a research perspective or paradigm, means for researchers – and crucially what it also does *not* mean.

- 1 Ethnomethodology's emphasis on 'knowledge-ability' must not be confused with claiming that members are always *conscious* of these ethnomethods. In fact, a central project of ethnomethodology is to explicate, study and document the typically *taken-for-granted* ethno-methods used by members. Samra-Fredericks and Bargiela-Chiappini (2008) use Garfinkel's phrase 'seen-but-unnoticed' to describe this taken-for-granted nature of common-sense reasoning. Rawls (2008, p. 711) describes it as the 'normally thought-less' character of ordinary activity: citing Garfinkel's infamous 'breaching experiments' as exercises designed to help us 'see' the constant mutual orientation that makes social organization possible. These breaching experiments showed that taken-for-granted 'facts' are only topicalized when they become problematic in some way. The fact that it is 'obvious' and 'just common sense' to competent members of society that a particular person is in a queue – just as most business activities like buying goods in a shop or phoning a call centre also seem common sense to us – is precisely the point. It is our common-sense knowledge that makes these activities happen without us noticing the *work* we do to make them happen. Only when the person in front of you in the 'queue' does not move forward when the queue moves forward, or suddenly turns around and faces you, or starts to wander off, does this activity become 'problematic' and therefore noticed.
- 2 Ethnomethodology's emphasis on the 'ongoing' and 'artful' accomplishment of social organization does not mean that 'anything goes': that any social action is viewed as sensible or that any account will be accepted or ratified by others. It also does not mean that people are 'free to do what they like' in social situations (Cuff et al., 1992, p. 174). Quite the contrary: ethnomethodology is centrally concerned with uncovering the more-or-less institutionalized and unequal opportunities and rights of different social actors to produce accounts and have them accepted by others and also the extent to which members are socially sanctioned in their attempts to deviate from expected or required types of behaviour (Watson & Goulet, 1998). It is an *empirical* question precisely how much 'room for manoeuvre' people have in particular situations (Cuff et al., 1992, p. 174).
- 3 Ethnomethodology does not seek to use its 'data' to make claims about what an event or activity 'really is' – either by ratifying an explanation given by one particular member as the

most accurate or reliable version of reality, or by replacing all of the member's explanations with the analyst's own version of 'the reality'. It is most certainly not about judging whether members are right or wrong in their understandings and explanations of their social world. The point is not to criticize, undermine or expose as 'false' how members make sense of their reality. Rather, the point is *to study empirically* how they produce and use these understandings and explanations. As Cuff et al. (1992, p. 177) explain:

In order to investigate members' understandings as practical accomplishments, ethnomethodology abstains from taking any position on what an action or event 'really is'. Its central interest is in how members decide such matters. ... Ethnomethodology, as a form of sociological inquiry, does not depend upon giving final or definitive descriptions of actions or events, far less upon giving unchallengeable explanations.

- 4 Ethnomethodology has its own answer to the 'so what?' question. What is the point of finding out about these ethno-methods used to accomplish business? Isn't it just 'obvious' – just 'common-sense'? For ethnomethodologists, the point of studying what members take as 'obvious' – and more importantly how they produce that 'obviousness' – is that this common sense is what is *constitutive of*, and *consequential for*, the unfolding scenes of social action they are involved in, such as conducting a recruitment interview (Llewellyn, 2010) or a conversation about business strategy (Samra-Fredericks, 2003). It is through their talk (and other social actions) that these business activities, processes and activities get done. Members' methods are what are used to 'get the task done' in consequential ways. For example, Zimmerman (1969) shows how case workers in a public welfare agency used their common-sense knowledge and reasoning procedures about the welfare claims they received to make the decisions about which claims should get approved and which claims should be rejected. It was this knowledge and reasoning that *constituted* their 'decisions', and these decisions were clearly *consequential* for those people who made the claims.
- 5 This takes us to the fifth and final point. Ethnomethodology is not concerned with just 'talk', or even just 'interpretation', understood as separated from so-called wider 'material structures'. Material outcomes most certainly

flow from the ethno-methods used in various institutional settings. Forms of unequal power, domination, inequality and exploitation are also thus implicated. The ethno-methods used in institutions such as the education system and the judicial system *are* what produce the unequal outcomes according to gender, race or class, as illustrated by studies of school classrooms (Leiter, 1976; Mehan, 1979), high school counsellors (Cicourel & Kitsuse, 1963), and the policing and prosecution of juvenile offenders (Cicourel, 1968; Meehan, 1986). Hence, ethnomethodology is not 'silent' on the 'big issues' of structural inequality in society, even though the commitment to so-called 'ethnomethodological indifference' means it deliberately does not 'take sides' and privilege or ratify certain versions over others (Gubrium and Holstein, 2012) (see point 3 above).

METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

Before concluding this chapter, it is worth considering some of the challenges that can often be encountered by researchers using an ethnomethodological approach. The first and most obvious challenge is one of *access* to the setting being studied. Unlike surveys, experiments and interviews, which are typically understood as relatively low-risk and low-commitment by participants (usually just a few hours of their time and with a guarantee of anonymity), ethnomethodological studies tend to require either deep immersion in the setting over a long period of time in the form of participant or non-participant observation – what Crabtree et al. (2000) refer to as ethnomethodologically informed ethnography – and/or the use of video or audio recording technology to capture the details of social interaction as it happens. Both of these methods rely on participants trusting the researcher(s) enough to let them in to observe them and/or record them. These methods can also pose a form of distraction or disruption to their everyday activities – especially if they are aware of being recorded. As the infamous Hawthorne studies showed, recording or observing people can affect their behaviour and this needs to be taken into account.

Some *ethical approval* procedures employed in universities nowadays also stipulate informed consent procedures that prohibit the recording of people without their explicit signed consent – something that would scupper any attempt to record people in their naturally occurring environment. To this end, researchers have made good use of existing recordings that are generated as part of the normal workplace activities, such as the recordings routinely made in call centres or webcasts. Other researchers have placed video cameras in public places where people expect to be filmed for other purposes (e.g. by CCTV on the high street and in museums) and used information posters to inform people that they are being recorded for research purposes, coupled with pixilation of faces and voice disguises on audio recordings to give additional anonymity (e.g. Llewellyn, 2011, 2011a; Llewellyn & Hindmarsh, 2013). The availability and placement of the technology is also a consideration and a potential drawback. Cameras must be strategically placed to capture the 'action' and often cannot capture every angle, an important consideration for ethnomethodological studies given the focus on how non-verbal behaviour such as gesture, gaze and bodily position are used to accomplish turn-by-turn organization.

There is also the issue of how to analyse the data and write up the findings. There are two related challenges here: the *analytic* challenge of deciding how to carve up the data for analysis and the *technical* challenge of presenting the 'raw material' of the video or audio data in a readable format for a written output. The analytic challenge is distinct for ethnomethodologists because they do not 'code' their data in the same way as other qualitative researchers. Two main strategies can be employed (see Francis & Hester, 2004: Chapter 2). Extended case analysis looks at a sequence of social action (for example, a manager giving instructions or an employee selling a product) and studies how it unfolds over time within its naturally occurring setting in order to identify the ethno-methods used to accomplish it, often embedded in a rich description of the field setting. This approach is particularly valuable when the activity being

studied is non-routine in nature and cannot therefore be naturally ‘grouped together’ with other such instances to form a ‘collection’.

A ‘collection’ refers to the grouping together of similar social actions (for example, managerial instructions to subordinates or sales pitches to customers, to continue the examples used earlier) to examine patterns of similarity and difference in how those social actions are accomplished and responded to. This latter approach of creating collections is typically used in the ‘sister’ field of ethnomethodology known as conversation analysis (CA), developed from the work of Harvey Sacks, who was himself inspired by Garfinkel’s ethnomethodology. CA uses these collections to develop systematic studies of how interaction is organized and accomplished, including applied studies of how talk is organized in institutional settings such as businesses (see e.g. Antaki, 2011).

The technical matter of how to present the video and audio data is the final challenge. Some ethnomethodologists capture ‘stills’ of the video to present alongside the transcript at various points when noteworthy social actions are being accomplished non-verbally. Transcripts are normally presented in the so-called Jeffersonian transcription system developed by Gail Jefferson (see Antaki, 2011, p. xii for a simplified version of Jeffersonian transcription notation) – a system alien to many editors, reviewers and readers that poses a challenge in itself. Some journals nowadays will allow video or audio clips to be uploaded with the written paper – subject to ethical consent from participants – a move that would certainly alleviate the challenge of trying to translate the raw data into a readable, text-based format.

CONCLUSION

Ethnomethodology offers a way of studying ‘the flow of “real-time” or “live” conduct within organizations’ (Llewellyn & Hindmarsh, 2010), which sets it apart from other ‘theories’ and their approach to research methods. Where other perspectives take the

accomplishment of organized action for granted, or merely provide a brief description of this work in order to get on with the business of ‘analysis’, ethnomethodology turns its analytic attention to this very fundamental activity that makes organization possible. As Llewellyn and Hindmarsh (2010, p. 4) argue: ‘It is only possible to witness, as seemingly objective and concrete phenomena, a business presentation, a recruitment interview or an action because they are continually being built and reproduced that way by members’.

According to Garfinkel and Rawls (2002), if we look at organizations such as firms and see that they manifest some kind of stability over time, some kind of ‘patterned orderliness’ to use their term, then we must therefore assume that, first, this is something that people must work constantly to achieve, and second, that these people must therefore have some shared methods for achieving it. In other words, while other approaches to business and management studies start with the assumption that ‘an organization’ exists with various ‘attributes’ or ‘variables’, ethnomethodology provides a radically different approach to business research by inviting us to study the activities through which these ‘facts’ are produced. The point is not to judge whether these facts are right or wrong: to prove or disprove their ‘factual’ status. Nor is it to replace them with the analyst’s own version of what the facts really are. Rather, the point is to study the *activities* (‘methods’) that are used to make them ‘fact-like’. This aim of this chapter has been to provide an overview of the main tenets of ethnomethodological thought, show how it approaches the study of formal organizations, provide an overview of existing ethnomethodological studies of business and management settings, and provide some guidance for researchers wishing to take up an ethnomethodological approach in their own studies.

Notes

- 1 Queueing has also been subject to ethnomethodological study - see Ball and Smith (1986).
- 2 Wieder’s (1974) book *Language and social reality: The case of telling the convict code* provides a useful guide to the differences between

ethnography as commonly conducted in anthropology and sociology (Part 1 of the book) and its ethnomethodological variant (Part 2 of the book). See also Rouncefield and Tolmie (2011) for a more extensive exposition of what they term 'ethnomethodologically-informed ethnography'.

- 3 Businesses often do forms of 'research' themselves, such as R&D or market research, and these activities – where they occur – are perfectly suited to ethnomethodological study.

REFERENCES

- Antaki, C. (Ed.). (2011) *Applied conversation analysis: Intervention and change in institutional talk*. London: Springer.
- Atkinson, J. M. & Drew, P. (1979) *Order in court: The organisation of verbal interaction in judicial settings*. London: Macmillan.
- Ball, M. & Smith, G. (1986) 'The visual availability of queuing's local organisation'. *Communication and Cognition* 19(1): 27–58.
- Benson, D. & Hughes, J. A. (1983) *The perspective of ethnomethodology*. London; New York: Longman Publishing Group.
- Bittner, E. (1967) 'The police on skid-row: A study of peace keeping'. *American Sociological Review* 32(5): 699–715.
- Bittner, E. (1974) 'The concept of *organization*', in R. Turner (Ed.) *Ethnomethodology*. Baltimore, MD: Penguin, pp. 69–81.
- Boden, D. (1990) 'The world as it happens: Ethnomethodology and conversation analysis', in George Ritzer (Ed.) *Frontiers of social theory: The new synthesis*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 185–213.
- Boden, D. (1994) *The business of talk: Organizations in action*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bolander, P. & Sandberg, J. (2013) 'How employee selection decisions are made in practice'. *Organization Studies* 34(3): 285–311.
- Button, Graham (Ed.) (1991) *Ethnomethodology and the human sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Button, G. & Sharrock, W. (1998) 'The organisational accountability of technical work'. *Social Studies of Sciences* 28(1): 73–102.
- Cicourel, A.V. (1968) *The social organization of juvenile justice*. New York: John Wiley.
- Cicourel, A.V. (1973) *Cognitive sociology: Language and meaning in social interaction*. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin.
- Cicourel, A. V. & Kitsuse, J. I. (1963) *The educational decision makers*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merill.
- Clark, C. & Pinch, T. (2010) 'Some major organisational consequences of some "minor" organised conduct: Evidence from a video analysis of pre-verbal encounters in a showroom retail store', in N. Llewellyn and J. Hindmarsh (Eds.) *Organisation, interaction and practice: studies in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 140–71.
- Coulon, A. (1995). *Ethnomethodology*. London: Sage.
- Crabtree, A., Nichols, D. M., O'Brien, J., Rouncefield, M. & Twidale, M. B. (2000). 'Ethnomethodologically informed ethnography and information system design'. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 51(7): 666–82.
- Cuff, E. C., Sharrock, W. W. & Francis, D. W. (1992) *Perspectives in sociology*. 3rd edition. London: Routledge.
- Drew, P. & Heritage, J. (Eds) (2013) *Contemporary Studies in Conversation Analysis*. London: Sage.
- Francis, D. & Hester, S. (2004) *An Invitation to ethnomethodology: Language, society and interaction*. London: Sage.
- Garfinkel, H. (1967) *Studies in ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Garfinkel, H. (Ed.) (1986) *Ethnomethodological studies of work*. London: Routledge.
- Garfinkel, H., Lynch, M. & Livingston, E. (1981) 'The work of a discovering science construed with materials from the optically discovered pulsar'. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 11(2): 131–58.
- Garfinkel, H. & Rawls, A. W. (2002) *Ethnomethodology's program: Working out Durkheim's aphorism*. Boulder, CO: Rowman and Littlefield Press.
- Gephart, R. P. (1978) 'Status degradation and organizational succession: An ethnomethodological approach'. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 23(4): 553–81.
- Gephart, R. P. (1984) 'Making sense of organizationally based environmental disasters'. *Journal of Management* 10(2): 205–25.
- Gephart, R. P. (1988) *Ethnostatistics: Qualitative foundations for quantitative research* (Volume 12). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gephart, R. P. (1993) 'The textual approach: Risk and blame in disaster sensemaking'. *Academy of Management Journal* 36(6): 1465–514.

- Gephart, R. P. (2004) 'Qualitative research and the Academy of Management Journal'. *Academy of Management Journal* 47(4): 454–62.
- Gephart, R. P. (2006) 'Ethnostatistics and organizational research methodologies: An introduction'. *Organizational Research Methods* 9(4): 417–31.
- Gubrium, J. F. & Holstein, J. A. (2012) 'Don't argue with the members'. *The American Sociologist* 43(1): 85–98.
- Handel, W. H. (1982) *Ethnomethodology: How people make sense*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Hartwood, M., Rouncefield, M., Slack, R. & Carlin, A. P. (2011) 'Documents', in M. Rouncefield and P. Tolmie (Eds) *Ethnomethodology of work*, pp. 151–71.
- Heath, C., Hindmarsh, J. & Luff, P. (1999) 'Interaction in isolation: The dislocated world of the London underground train driver'. *Sociology* 33(3): 555–75.
- Heath, C. & Luff, P. (1996) 'Documents and professional practice: "Bad" organisational reasons for "good" clinical records', in *Proceedings of the 1996 ACM conference on Computer supported cooperative work*. Boston, Massachusetts: Association for Computing Machinery (pp. 354–63).
- Heath, C. & Luff, P. (2000) *Technology in action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Heath, C., & Luff, P. (2010) 'Orders of bidding: Organising participation in auctions of fine art and antiques', in N. Llewellyn and J. Hindmarsh (Eds) *Organisation, interaction and practice: Studies in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 119–39.
- Hilbert, R. A. (1990) 'Ethnomethodology and the micro-macro order'. *American Sociological Review* 55(6): 794–808.
- Housley, W. (2003) *Interaction in multidisciplinary teams*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Hughes, J. A. (2011) 'On calculation', in P. Tolmie and M. Rouncefield (Eds) *Ethnomethodology at work*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, pp. 57–72.
- Hughes, J., Randall, D., Rouncefield, M. & Tolmie, P. (2011) 'Meetings and the accomplishment of organization', in N. Llewellyn and J. Hindmarsh (Eds) *Organisation, interaction and practice: Studies in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 131–50.
- Iszatt-White, M. (2010) 'Strategic leadership: The effortful accomplishment of valuing practices'. *Leadership* 6(4): 409–24.
- Iszatt-White, M. (2011) 'Methodological crises and contextual solutions: An ethnomethodologically-informed approach to understanding leadership'. *Leadership* 7(2): 121–37.
- Leiter, K. (1976) 'Teachers' use of background knowledge to interpret test scores'. *Sociology of Education* 49(1): 59–65.
- Leiter, K. (1980) *A primer on ethnomethodology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Llewellyn, N. (2008) 'Organization in actual episodes: Harvey Sacks and organization studies'. *Organization Studies* 29 (2008): 763–91.
- Llewellyn, N. (2010) 'On the reflexivity between setting and practice: The "recruitment interview"', in N. Llewellyn and J. Hindmarsh (Eds) *Organisation, interaction and practice: Studies in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 74–95.
- Llewellyn, N. (2011) 'The Gift in interaction: The practice of "picking up the bill"', *British Journal of Sociology* 62(4): 718–38.
- Llewellyn, N. (2011a) 'The delicacy of the gift: Passing donations and leaving change' *Discourse & Society* 22(2): 155–74.
- Llewellyn, N. & Hindmarsh, J. (Eds) (2010) *Organisation, interaction and practice: Studies in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Llewellyn, N. & Hindmarsh, J. (2013) 'The order problem: Inference and interaction in interactive service work', *Human Relations* 66(11): 1401–26.
- Llewellyn, N. & Spence, L. (2009) 'Practice as a members' phenomenon', *Organization Studies* 30(12): 1419–39.
- Luff, P., Hindmarsh, J. & Heath, C. (2000) *Workplace Studies: Recovering Work Practice and Informing Systems Design*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lynch, M. (1993) *Scientific practice and ordinary action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mannheim, K. (1952) 'The problem of generations', in P. Kecskemeti (Ed.) *Essays on the sociology of knowledge by Karl Mannheim*. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp. 276–320.
- Meehan, A. J. (1986) 'Record-keeping Practices in the Policing of Juveniles'. *Urban Life* 15(1): 70–102.

- Mehan, H. (1979) *Learning lessons: Social organization in the classroom*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Moore, B., Whalen, J. & Hankinson Gathman, E. C. (2010) 'The work of the work order: Document practice in face-to-face service encounters', in N. Llewellyn and J. Hindmarsh (Eds) *Organisation, interaction and practice: Studies in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 172–97.
- Neyland, D. (2006) 'Moving images: The mobility and immobility of "kids standing still"'. *The Sociological Review* 54(2): 363–81.
- Orr, J. E. (1996) *Talking about machines: An ethnography of a modern job*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Pollner, M. (1974) 'Sociological and common sense models of the labelling process', in R. Turner (Ed.) *Ethnomethodology: Selected readings*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, pp. 27–40.
- Pollner, M. (1987) *Mundane reason: Reality in everyday and sociological discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Randall, D. & Rouncefield, M. (2011) 'Plans and planning: Conceptual confusions and empirical investigations', in M. Rouncefield and P. Tolmie (Eds) *Ethnomethodological studies of work*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, pp. 73–90.
- Rawls, A. W. (2008) 'Harold Garfinkel, ethnomethodology and workplace studies'. *Organization Studies* 26(5): 701–32.
- Rooksby, J. (2011) 'Text at work. Mundane practices of reading in workplaces', in P. Tolmie and M. Rouncefield (Eds) *Ethnomethodology at work*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, pp. 173–89.
- Rouncefield, M. & Tolmie, P. (Eds) (2011) *Ethnomethodological studies of work*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate.
- Samra-Fredericks, D. (2000) 'An analysis of the behavioural dynamics of corporate governance – a talk-based ethnographic account of a UK manufacturing board-in-action'. *Corporate Governance: An International Review* 8(4): 311–25.
- Samra-Fredericks, D. (2003) 'Strategizing as lived experience and strategists' everyday efforts to shape strategic direction'. *Journal of Management Studies* 40(1): 141–74.
- Samra-Fredericks, D. (2004) 'Managerial elites making rhetorical/linguistic "moves" for a moving (emotional) display'. *Human Relations* 57(9): 1103–43.
- Samra-Fredericks, D. (2005) 'Strategic practice, "discourse" and the everyday constitution of "power effects"'. *Organisation* 12(6): 803–41.
- Samra-Fredericks, D. (2010) 'Ethnomethodology and the moral accountability of interaction: Navigating the conceptual terrain of "face" and face-work'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 42(8): 2147–57.
- Samra-Fredericks, D. & Bargiela-Chiappini, F. (2008) 'Introduction to the symposium on the foundations of organizing: The contribution from Garfinkel, Goffman and Sacks'. *Organization Studies* 29(5): 653–75.
- Schutz, A. (1953) 'Common-sense and scientific interpretation in human action'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 14(11): 1–38.
- Sharrock, W. (2012) 'The project as an organisational environment for the division of labour', in M. Rouncefield and P. Tolmie (Eds) *Ethnomethodological Studies of Work*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, pp. 19–36.
- Suchman, L. (1987) *Plans and situated actions: The Problem of human-machine communication*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Suchman, L. (1993) 'Technologies of accountability: Of lizards and aeroplanes'. In G. Button (Ed.) *Technology in working order: Studies of work, interaction and technology*. London: Routledge, pp. 113–26.
- Sudnow, D. (1965) 'Normal crimes: Sociological features of the penal code in a public defender office'. *Social Problems* 12(3): 255–76.
- ten Have, P. (2004) *Understanding qualitative research and ethnomethodology*. London: Sage.
- Watson, G. & Goulet, J. (1998) 'What can ethnomethodology say about power?' *Qualitative Inquiry* 4(1): 96–113.
- Watson, R. (2009) *Analysing practical and professional texts*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate.
- Weick, K. (1969) *The social psychology of organizing*. Reading: Addison-Wesley.
- Weick, K. E. (1995) *Sensemaking in organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Wieder, D. L. (1974) *Language and social reality: The case of telling the convict code* (Volume 10). The Hague: Mouton.
- Zimmerman, D. H. (1969) 'Record-keeping and the intake process in a public welfare agency', in S. Wheeler (Ed.) *On record: Files and dossiers in American life*. New York: Russell Sage, 319–45. Selected excerpts reprinted in R. Turner (Ed.) (1974) *Ethnomethodology: Selected readings*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, pp. 128–43.

From Grounded Theory to Grounded Theorizing in Qualitative Research

Judith A. Holton

INTRODUCTION

Since its inception fifty years ago, grounded theory¹ (GT) has achieved canonical status in the research world (Locke, 2001). Qualitative researchers, in particular, have embraced GT, although often without sufficient scholarship in the methodology (Gephart, 2004; Partington, 2000, 2002). The tendency has been to consider GT a qualitative research approach while ignoring its quantitative roots and its inherent flexibility as a general research methodology amenable to a range of epistemological perspectives and research paradigms (Glaser, 2003, 2005; Holton, 2008). Consequently, we have seen a range of methodologies claiming GT status (Birks and Mills, 2011, 2015; Charmaz, 2000, 2006, 2014a; Gioia et al., 2013; Goulding, 2002; Redman-MacLaren and Mills, 2015; Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1998; Urquhart, 2013). Over time, GT has emerged as synonymous with a more general term, ‘grounded theorizing’ (Langley, 1999; Locke, 2007) or ‘grounded analysis’ (Johnson and

Harris, 2002: 113). Walsh et al. (2015a) suggest that ‘[t]his blurring of terms is at the heart of the persistent “rhetorical wrestle” (Glaser, 1998) surrounding grounded theory’ (p. 625).

Given the various interpretations and approaches, this chapter addresses important distinctions between GT as a general research methodology and its popularization as an evolving and pluralistic approach under the umbrella of qualitative research (Charmaz, 2009). The perspective offered here is that the term ‘grounded theory’ should be reserved for work that respects the original intention of the classic methodology; i.e. the systematic generation of theory from data presented as a core category, abstract of the descriptive details of people, time and place, to conceptually explain a main concern in the area under study and its continual processing or resolution. To illustrate this distinction, this chapter begins with a brief overview of GT’s origins, foundational pillars and methodological principles then continues by addressing the methodological drift to the more general

notion of grounded theorizing as adopted by qualitative researchers who align their work to some extent or other with grounded theory. The chapter continues with an overview of the criteria for judging the quality of classic grounded theory and concludes by proposing that choosing to differentiate grounded theory from grounded theorizing offers the management field a way forward in resolving the persistent ‘rhetorical wrestle’ (Glaser, 1998) around grounded theory.

ORIGINS OF GROUNDED THEORY METHODOLOGY

GT originated in the mid-1960s with the ground-breaking work in medical sociology of Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (Glaser and Strauss, 1965) and the subsequent publication of *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). While the text is generally acknowledged as the seminal work on GT, Glaser reveals that he was actually developing the method in his doctoral work at Columbia University and that he authored the first draft of *Discovery*, later sharing it with Strauss who added comments and wrote an additional three chapters (Glaser, 1998: 22–7).

The well-documented schism between the methodology’s originators occurred with the publication of *Basics of Qualitative Research* (Strauss, and Corbin, 1990), which publicly surfaced ‘rather disparate traditions ... and planted the seeds of divergent directions for the method’ (Charmaz, 2009: 129). Glaser’s (1992) polemic response, *Basics of Grounded Theory: Emergence vs. forcing*, offers a sharp critique in which he differentiates the original methodology from what Strauss and Corbin were advocating. He clearly regarded the 1990 publication as a remodelled method that he termed ‘full conceptual description’ (p. 123); a reaction against its excessive operationalism and his desire to preserve GT’s openness (Gibson and Hartman, 2014: 100). Glaser is generally recognized as having

retained both the spirit and the substance of the original work (Locke, 2001: 64). His continuing concern with the eroding impact of various subsequent ‘remodellings’ has motivated him to produce several additional publications in which he endeavours to clarify the purpose, principles and procedures that together constitute classic (Glaserian) GT and which, together with *Discovery*, offer researchers a solid base for its study and application (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2013, 2014).

With its roots in inductive quantitative analysis (Glaser, 1992, 1998), GT reflects a latent structure analysis approach for revealing fundamental patterns of social behaviour that explain conceptually how a main issue (core concern) in the area under study is processed or resolved. Hypothesis generation in GT is essentially the statement of probabilities that explain these latent patterns of social behaviour (Glaser, 1998: 22). Glaser (2003: 127) claims that classic GT stands alone as a conceptualization method and that to understand the nature of classic GT one must appreciate the distinction between conceptualization and description. Glaser (1992) defines a concept as ‘the underlying meaning, uniformity and/or pattern within a set of descriptive incidents’ (p. 38). While offering descriptive findings is an important value in qualitative research (Gephart, 2004), GT is not about reporting thematically organized detailed, descriptive findings. Descriptive detail is not the concern of the grounded theorist but rather the abstraction of concepts that lie within the data. Data collection and analysis is focused on the emergence and specification of a core concept or category that identifies a main issue or concern in the area under study and *conceptually* – not descriptively – explains how that concern ‘plays out’; i.e. how it is managed or resolved. GT uses any and all types of data, both qualitative and quantitative (Glaser, 2001; Holton and Walsh, 2017).

Qualitative description confines theoretical ideas to specific contexts, limiting conceptual transferability. ‘Describing what is going on

does not explain conceptually what is going on as a fundamental pattern of social behaviour' (Glaser, 2002, para. 41). Conceptual abstraction transcends standard qualitative research concerns with accuracy, interpretation and representation of multiple perspectives via data displays to put the focus on concept generation from empirical data in service to the discovery of a latent pattern that theoretically explains rather than describes behaviour that occurs conceptually and generally in many diverse groups with a same concern (Glaser, 2003: 117). While empirically grounded, contextualization of meaning may or may not be relevant in explaining how a main concern is continually resolved (Glaser, 2004: para. 62). 'Only concepts can relate to concepts to achieve hypothesis construction. ... Descriptions cannot relate to descriptions in any clear or precise way if at all. Hypotheses, if achieved, are unit empirical with no generalizability' (Glaser, 2001: 38).

This distinction between a focus on conceptualization rather than description is a major differentiation between GT and grounded theorizing in qualitative research. It does not suggest that GT is superior to qualitative (or quantitative) methods but rather complementary. 'Quantitative research and QDA [qualitative data analysis] provide description of aggregates and in-depth cases respectively and GT provides the conceptual overview with grounded interpretation, explanations, impacts, underlying causes and so forth' (Glaser, 2003: 118). As with all theory, a grounded theory is tentative, not factual; open to modification based on additional data and analysis.

GROUNDED THEORY AS A GENERAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Various scholars have positioned GT as post-positivist (Annells, 1996), objectivist (Charmaz, 2000), interpretivist (Lowenberg, 1993), pragmatist (Locke, 2001), realist (Lomborg and Kirkevold; Partington, 2000,

2002) and symbolic interpretivist (Kenealy, 2008). Much of this confusion, of course, can be attributed to the array of terminology used by various scholars to set out the boundaries and distinctions between and among the espoused research paradigms and associated issues of ontology, epistemology and methodology. Charmaz (2000) attributes the confusion to a lack of explicitness in *Discovery* (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and the subsequent search to fit GT to accepted research paradigms (p. 524). While espousing an interpretivist perspective, Charmaz suggests that individual grounded theorists need to examine and declare their own epistemological premises; that '[t]he theory depends on the researcher's view; it does not and cannot stand outside of it' (Charmaz, 2014a: 239).

Glaser (2005) has dismissed the notion that GT is essentially interpretivist and insists that it is a general methodology that can be used with any kind of data – qualitative, quantitative or a combination thereof (p. 141) '... whatever the paradigm and the methodology for achieving it' (Glaser, 2003: 182). With its binary roots in quantitative methodology and qualitative mathematics, Glaser asserts GT's theoretical transcendence of a positivistic focus on verification in pursuit of theory generation through pattern recognition: 'Pattern search is survey modelled as it aggregates incidents like surveys aggregate people. And then the task is to start relating these conceptualized patterns to generate a theory using theoretical codes' (Glaser, 1998: 31). He notes that Lazarsfeld did not perceive any research method as wholly quantitative or qualitative but instead 'showed constantly how all research contained both elements' (Glaser, 1998:29). Rejecting the neat divide between positivist and interpretivist paradigms, Glaser claims that GT is neutral and as 'issues free as research can get' (Glaser, 2003: 115).

When viewed as a general research methodology, GT is not confined to any particular epistemological or ontological perspective; rather, it can facilitate any philosophical perspective as embraced by the researcher.

Holton and Walsh (2017) maintain this philosophical flexibility of GT, suggesting that it is the researcher's philosophical stance that comes into play in terms of 'the substantive area of interest they may choose as their initial focus and what they consider to be appropriate data sources' (p. 11). Acknowledging GT's philosophical flexibility puts to rest much of the 'rhetorical wrestle' (Glaser, 1998) – a seemingly circular process that has inhibited understanding and acceptance of the methodology and has subsequently led to numerous (mis)interpretations and remodelled versions.

GROUNDING THEORY'S FOUNDATIONAL PILLARS

Perhaps an appropriate place to begin distinguishing between GT and 'grounded theorizing' would be to identify what is essential or foundational in justifying a claim to GT. A return to the seminal text (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) is a necessary first step for anyone wishing to understand and use GT, but it is simply a start. As Partington (2002) suggests, 'despite the frequency with which [*Discovery*] is cited, by no means all of those who refer to the work are true to its purpose, which was to achieve the fine balance between procedural rigour and creativity' (p. 136). Charmaz (2014b) has suggested, *Discovery's* 'symbolic significance ... exceeded its usefulness as a guide' (p. 1076). Holton and Walsh (2017) describe the text as more an outline than a procedural guide (p. 6). Still, for any researcher wishing to understand the essence and power of GT, it is essential reading. Classic grounded theorists consider Glaser's (1978) text, *Theoretical Sensitivity*, their fundamental guide in 'setting forth a systematic approach to analysis and ... explicating the general and specific nature of GT, integrating and elaborating on methodological advances discovered and developed through ... [Glaser's] years of teaching' (Holton and Walsh, 2017: 6).

Qualitative researchers making claims to GT have frequently been accused of methods muddling (Stern, 1994) when citing their use of specific aspects of the methodology (e.g. constant comparison, theoretical sampling) but at the same time ignoring another foundational pillar, emergence. But GT is more than a 'toolbox' (Charmaz and Keller, 2016: 38) or a 'cookbook' (Gioia et al., 2013: 26). Its systematic procedures are coupled with a non-linear process of data collection and analysis that facilitates researcher creativity. Gephart (2004) suggests that 'most authors making qualitative submissions claim to have used grounded theory processes, although references to grounded theory are more common than detailed application of grounded theory techniques' (p. 456). Others make claims that misinterpret specific GT procedures (e.g. confusing theoretical coding² with coding of extant theory in the literature). Gibson and Hartman (2014) distil the essential elements of GT as openness, explanatory power, generation versus justification, theory structure and the research process (pp. 32–42). Holton and Walsh (2017) suggest three foundational pillars of GT that must be respected: emergence, constant comparison and theoretical sampling (pp. 29–30). These pillars (as elaborated below), together with GT's methodological principles (see Appendix A), enable the systematic generation of a classic grounded theory.

Emergence

While many qualitative researchers who claim GT will assert their use of constant comparison and theoretical sampling, there is much less clarity around claims to respecting GT's emergent nature. Emergence necessitates that the researcher remains open to what is discovered empirically in the data 'without first having them filtered through and squared with pre-existing hypotheses and biases' (Glaser, 1978: 3) or theoretical frameworks drawn from extant theory. Examples of GT studies respecting this fundamental precept of emergence

include Pettigrew's (2002) grounded theory of image management, Raffanti's (2005) of weathering change, Holton's (2007) of fluctuating support networks and Walsh et al.'s (2016) of expectable use. In many qualitative studies, however, emergence is restricted to the analysis phase (e.g. Corley and Gioia, 2004), and with data collection actively framed through an initial review of the literature (e.g. Partington, 2000), articulation of specific research questions, frequent privileging of interview data and the development of interview protocols for 'consistency' in data collection (e.g. Xiao et al., 2004).

While ignoring the emergent nature of GT in favour of accepted precepts of qualitative research, Partington (2002) advocates pre-framing a study through extant theory as a means of making 'explicit the researcher's ontological and epistemological assumptions [as] the best foundation on which to construct and defend a theoretical argument' (p. 141). Strauss and Corbin's (1998) linear, prescriptive approach is frequently espoused by qualitative researchers while applying preconceived theoretical frameworks together with pre-formulated problems and research questions (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 36–42), a 'sensitizing' review of the literature (pp. 46–8) and the use of one theoretical code – the conditional matrix as a coding paradigm (pp. 181–99). While their approach may have been offered to address the inexperienced researcher's methodological hesitancy, the result is 'preconceived, forced, conceptual description' (Glaser, 1992: 4).

Another approach to theory building increasingly cited in management research papers and handbooks as equated with GT is the Gioia methodology (Gioia et al., 2013). Closely aligned with Strauss and Corbin, what Gioia et al. (2013) set forth, however, is more appropriately grounded theorizing. While the approach is inductive, they too ignore GT's foundational pillar of emergence. The focus of the study is assumed and preconceived by the researcher's professional interest rather than an emergent main

concern. While there is emphasis on concept development, concepts are described as 'more general, less well-specified notion[s] capturing qualities that describe or explain a phenomenon of theoretical interest' (p. 16) and their development is nested within a thematic analysis, emphasizing rich description of data sets that 'make extraordinary efforts to give voice to the informants in the early stages of data gathering and analysis and also to represent their voices prominently in the reporting of the research' (p. 17). Similar to Charmaz (2006, 2014a), they make no reference to a core category – the essential 'lynch pin' for theoretical integration in GT.³ While these differences may seem subtle (and unapparent to many new to GT), they significantly influence the direction of data collection and analysis, rendering it inconsistent with GT.

Constant Comparison

Glaser's early training in '*explication de texte*' at the Sorbonne would be a foundational influence in GT's constant comparative method by which the researcher examines and conceptually codes data with 'as little imputation and interpretation as possible' (Glaser, 1998: 24).

The social organization of life goes on and on. The GT goal is to discover it conceptually not describe it ... The worldview of GT is to allow the researcher the freedom to discover and generate conceptual theory about 'whatever' and not preconceive its nature. Its limits are the researcher's self and resources. (Glaser, 2003: 127–8)

The constant comparative method enables the generation of theory through systematic and explicit coding and analytic procedures whereby data are continuously compared with previously collected and analysed data as the researcher looks for similarities and differences. Each new empirical incident is analysed in relation to previously analysed data to see if the data continue to support the emerging concepts. This interchangeability of empirical indicators found within the data

moves the development of theory forward: (1) first to the emergence of a main issue or concern and a core category that appears to explain how that issue is managed, then (2) through selective coding and theoretical saturation of the core category and related concepts to (3) the emerging theory's final integration through theoretical coding.

The constant comparative process raises the conceptual level of the data. The process involves three types of comparison. First, incidents are compared to incidents to establish underlying uniformity and varying conditions. The uniformity and the conditions become generated concepts and hypotheses. Then, concepts are compared to more incidents to generate new theoretical properties of the concept and more hypotheses. The purpose is theoretical elaboration, saturation and verification of concepts, densification of concepts by developing their properties and the generation of additional concepts. Concepts are then compared to concepts. The purpose is to establish the best fit from among many choices of concepts to a set of indicators and to establish conceptual levels between concepts referring to the same set of indicators and, finally, their integration into hypotheses to establish relationships between the concepts as an integrated theory (Glaser, 1978: 49–50). Some qualitative researchers find the constant comparison process a challenge as they grapple with attending to what Glaser has termed 'worrisome accuracy' (Glaser and Holton, 2004: para. 2) – the reluctance to leave behind rich descriptive detail in service to conceptual abstraction. As such, they revert to thematic analysis or confine their attention to descriptive elaboration of a core category, neither of which produces a conceptually integrated theory. What results is 'linear, thin and less than fully integrated' (Glaser, 1978: 116).

Theoretical Sampling

The explicit coding and analytic procedures of constant comparison work in tandem with

GT's third foundational pillar, theoretical sampling, whereby in collecting, coding and analysing data, the researcher makes decisions about what data to collect and where to find those data based on theoretical ideas emerging through the iterative analysis process; what Gobo (2008) suggests is an interactive, progressive and iterative approach to sampling. As such, the process of data collection is controlled by the emerging theory. Beyond the decisions concerning initial collection of data, further collection cannot be planned in advance of the emerging theory. Only as the researcher discovers codes and tries to saturate them by looking for comparison groups can decisions be made about where to collect subsequent data for conceptual elaboration of emerging concepts. By identifying emerging gaps in the theory, the researcher will be guided as to next sources of data collection. The basic question in theoretical sampling is: to what groups or subgroups does one turn next in data collection – and for what theoretical purpose (Glaser, 1978)? The possibilities of multiple comparisons are infinite and so groups must be chosen according to theoretical criteria. The criteria – of theoretical purpose and relevance – are applied in the ongoing joint collection and analysis of data. In this way, the researcher can continually adjust the control of data collection to ensure the data's relevance to the emerging theory. Concepts earn relevance in the emerging grounded theory through this careful, systematic generation and analysis of empirical data (Glaser, 1978). This tandem process of analysis and sampling ensures that the emergent theory is grounded in the data, not extant theory, and that the emergent theory is conceptually elaborated rather than logically deduced (Glaser, 1978: 37–41).

FROM GROUNDED THEORY TO GROUNDED THEORIZING

Qualitative research represents 'a range of rich and vibrant approaches to the study of human

lives and social phenomena' (Brinkmann et al., 2014: 40), facilitating the study of issues in depth and detail (Patton, 2002: 14). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) describe qualitative research as a complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts and assumptions that cuts across disciplines, fields and subject matter (p. 3). In describing qualitative research, methodologists refer to a bewildering array of paradigms (Locke, 2001), perspectives (Chia, 2002), tensions, contradictions and hesitations (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011), strategies and approaches (Creswell, 2014), theoretical orientations (Patton, 2015), and genres (Marshall and Rossman, 2016). The varying perspectives espouse a range of epistemological and ontological premises.

While describing qualitative research as a 'vibrant and contested field with many contradictions', Brinkmann et al. (2014: 17) suggest that its existence had been 'rather shadowy and marginalized' (p. 31) until late in the twentieth century. GT's emergence had offered a much-needed response in this struggle to rebalance 'taken-for-granted hierarchies' (Charmaz, 2014b: 1074) in academia that privileged positivistic emphasis on theory verification over theory generation and that disregarded qualitative methods as holding little value, possibly even unscientific (Brinkmann et al., 2014: 17) and lacking scholarly rigour (Gioia et al., 2013: 15). Charmaz (2014b) suggests that Glaser and Strauss 'democratized theory construction and made it within the realm of the working researcher. ... They argued that qualitative research proceeds by a different canon than quantitative inquiry and cannot be judged by the criteria for quantitative research' (p. 1076).

This qualitative embrace, however, has led many to position GT as solely a qualitative research method (Eaves, 2001) or methodology (Gioia et al., 2013); 'a generic term to refer to any qualitative approach in which an inductive analysis is grounded in data' (Jones and Noble, 2007: 84), or 'simply a set of coding techniques' (Pozzebon et al., 2011: 178). Glaser (2009) has suggested that perhaps

GT's greatest contribution has been to provide qualitative researchers with a methodological vocabulary, however inappropriately applied.

While Strauss and Corbin's (1990) approach marks the initial deviation from classic GT to grounded theorizing in qualitative research, GT's devolution has been gradual but persistent. Glaser's (2002, 2003, 2004; Glaser and Holton, 2004) chief concern is that confining GT to qualitative research remodels the methodology to fit with the canons of qualitative research, thereby eroding its power as a general research methodology. Despite the wide acceptance of methodological pluralism as inevitable and a natural evolution of a methodology (Charmaz, 2014a, 2014b; Gibson and Hartman, 2014; Locke, 2001), Hood (2007) echoes Glaser's concern that this 'blurring the distinction between Grounded Theory and the generic inductive model risks losing the unique power of Grounded Theory' (p. 152). Walsh et al. (2015b) suggest remodelling 'provide[s] limitive and restrictive perspectives on GT, which is much broader and should be investigated from seminal texts if one is to grab its reach and scope' (p. 595). While Bryant and Charmaz (2007) imply that Glaser has become 'far more amenable' (p. 4) to the remodelling and has adopted a 'more accommodating view that at least acknowledges' (p. 5) the disparities, one should not confuse such acknowledgement with acceptance.⁴

Gibson and Hartman (2014) concede that methodological pluralism 'can make the task of understanding what a grounded theory should look like more complicated' (p. 30). Morse (1997) suggests that qualitative researchers are theoretically timid and may be inhibited by what she sees as the hard work of conceptualization necessary to produce theory. While acknowledging the possibility of timidity, Glaser (2001) suggests that many researchers simply lack knowledge and competence in conceptualization and, therefore, embrace the idea without fully understanding what is required. The resultant remodelled approaches are often a dim reflection of the theorizing power of classic GT methodology.

Fendt and Sachs (2008) and Evans (2013) offer us such accounts of novice efforts to understand and apply GT. In detailing the difficulties one doctoral student encountered in navigating the pluralistic approaches to GT, Fendt and Sachs (2008) advocate against what they perceive to be ‘an overly orthodox application of [GT’s] rigorous objectification procedures’ (p. 430). Their account can perhaps be best described as what Glaser (2001) has termed ‘reflexivity paralysis’ (p. 47); an unfortunate example of both novice and supervisor entrapped in methods slurring (Stern, 1994). The crux of their difficulties stems from their efforts to accommodate standard expectations of qualitative research (e.g. preconceived researcher interest as the focus of the study, extensive initial literature review), while pulling on various qualitative methods and techniques (e.g. triangulation of data sources, interrater checking, extensive verbatim quoting) that resulted in the student amassing ‘a Herculean mountain of data’ (p. 438) all the while being consumed with concerns for what Glaser (2002) has coined ‘descriptive capture’ (para. 9) and ‘full coverage’ (para. 44). While endeavouring to adhere more consistently to the classic GT methodology, Evans (2013) concludes his account by cautioning novice researchers to ‘[a]pproach the how-to grounded theory books with a great deal of caution, many speak the terms but do not walk the talk’ (p. 49). Thus, we can see how methodological pluralism without canonical clarity can lead many into methodological confusion and its inherent frustrations!

Further complicating the pursuit of canonical clarity is the globalization of research methodologies into contexts very different from those in which methodologies emerged and developed. Gobo (2011) suggests that methods are rooted in specific historical, cultural and sociopolitical contexts. Chen (2016) offers an account of efforts to embrace and adapt qualitative research methods to the modern Chinese context, noting the strictures of Western research protocols (e.g. informed

consent) and analytic techniques (e.g. fractured coding of detailed descriptive data) as culturally incompatible with Chinese thinking. Here, grounded theorists may find some common ground with Chinese thinking; in particular with what Chen refers to as the Chinese cultural tradition of holistic thinking, which emphasizes imagery and pattern recognition over the ‘hairsplitting’ and ‘dissecting’ (p. 78) of some Western approaches to qualitative data coding and analysis. Chen’s reference to the Chinese pedagogy of unity of knowing and doing, i.e. experiential learning (p. 75), certainly resonates with Glaser’s (1998) view of GT as a delayed action learning process (p. 220) and his anthem to ‘Just do it!’ (p. 19).

While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide an exhaustive review of the various approaches offered as GT, a small sampling of how the classic methodology has been remodelled to fit with a range of qualitative approaches may serve to illustrate some of the issues that result in methodological drift into ‘grounded theorizing’ (Pozzebonn et al., 2011). Charmaz (2000) accepts the general nature of GT methodology when she suggests the method can be used with either quantitative or qualitative data and from either an objectivist or constructivist perspective. She acknowledges *Discovery* (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and *Theoretical Sensitivity* (Glaser, 1978) as ‘the classic statements of the method’ (Charmaz, 2009: 148) while asserting that the boundaries around what constitutes GT ‘need not be rigid and inflexible’ (Charmaz, 2014b: 1081). In so doing, however, she appears to reduce GT to a toolbox of methods ‘transportable across epistemological and ontological gulfs (Charmaz, 2014a: 12). Gibson and Hartman (2014) suggest that, while inspired by classic GT, Charmaz’s constructivist GT produces a different product in the form of ‘a loose set of constructs with a critical discussion’ (p. 63).

With reference to constructivist GT, Glaser (2002) writes:

Constructivism ... is an epistemological bias to achieve a credible, accurate description of data collection (para. 10) ... her quest is not to take the data as it comes but to be sure it is accurate, so she gets to mutual interpretation as the answer (para. 8). ... Charmaz has clearly remodelled GT from a conceptual theory to a QDA conceptual description method with worrisome accuracy at issue (para. 38). ... The strength of QDA research has clouded and swayed her view of GT, and thus she denies and blocks its true conceptual nature. (para. 28).

Glaser (2003) has also challenged Lincoln and Guba's (1985) positioning of GT as qualitative research. He views their naturalist inquiry perspective as 'changing views of worrisome accuracy, but always accuracy. It does not address the abstract nature of GT ... a flexible, conceptual, inductive methodology abstract of their discussion on finding the right truth, belief, to wit their focus on worrisome accuracy' (p. 182). Locke (2001) embraces GT while also nestling it within a 'qualitative paradigm' (p. 30). In a later publication, she conflates GT with 'grounded theorizing', vigorously defending the pluralistic evolution of the methodology while dismissing the classic GT approach as a step back in time (Locke, 2015: 616). Partington (2002), however, recognizes the erosion of GT to 'grounded theorizing' when he says,

in qualitative management research, the term 'GT' has taken on a more generic meaning, tending to embrace all theory-building approaches that are based on coding of qualitative data. An inevitable consequence of this broadening of meaning has been a certain loss of attention to the essential principles of the Glaser and Strauss approach, and to their purpose. (p. 136)

He acknowledges, as well, the general inconsistency with which research methods are applied in qualitative management research. 'One of the consequences of this lack of uniformity is that every qualitative researcher tends to develop their own individual approach' (p. 137). He then proceeds to prescribe his own requirements that in effect produce yet another version which, like many remodelled versions, encourages preconception. He also advocates taping and transcribing of interviews,

suggesting a need for full data capture rather than a reliance on the researcher's ability to capture the data more conceptually through field notes. He emphasizes audit trails to validate the research results and identifies criteria for judging the quality of a GT which are in fact qualitative research criteria and not the criteria of fit, workability, relevance and modifiability that align with classic GT (Glaser, 1978, 1998; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Use of phrases such as 'thickness of description' (Partington, 2002: 154) and 'full richness of the data' (p. 144) further mirror the concerns of qualitative data analysis for full conceptual description rather than the abstract conceptualization of GT.

JUDGING THE QUALITY OF GROUNDED THEORY

Different approaches to research necessitate different criteria for judging the quality of research outcomes. Attempts at GT vary in quality according to the methodological approach and thoroughness of the study but must be assessed from the internal logic of the GT methodology itself and not from the inappropriate application of external criteria from other research paradigms and methodologies (Charmaz, 1994). The criteria of fit, workability, relevance and modifiability as established by Glaser and Strauss (1967: 237–50) and reaffirmed by Glaser (1978: 4–6) remain the standards by which the quality of a grounded theory should be assessed. *Fit* refers to the emergence of conceptual codes and categories from the data rather than from the use of preconceived codes or categories from extant theory. *Workability* refers to the ability of the grounded theory to explain and interpret behaviour in a substantive area and to predict future behaviour. *Relevance* refers to the theory's focus on a core concern or process that emerges in a substantive area. Its conceptual grounding in the data indicates the significance and

relevance of this core concern or process, thereby ensuring its relevance. *Modifiability* refers to the theory's ability to be continually modified as new data emerge to produce new categories, properties or dimensions of the theory. This living quality of GT ensures its continuing relevance and value to the social world from which it has emerged. 'A [grounded theory] is neither right nor wrong, it just has more or less fit, relevance, workability and modifiability. Readers of [grounded theories] should evaluate them against these criteria' (Thulesius, 2003: 27).

GROUNDING THEORY OR GROUNDED THEORIZING – A WAY FORWARD?

For the past quarter century, scholars have been debating the nature of grounded theory. All the while, its popularity has continued to grow. As management scholars, we have seen a diverse range of research outcomes published in doctoral studies and academic papers claiming to be grounded theories. While not disputing the value of such work or its contribution to our discipline, perhaps the issue is whether we are content to tolerate what at times appears to be an 'anything goes' (Jones and Noble, 2007: 84) approach to such claims or whether we might benefit from establishing at least some basic parameters to guide the veracity of such claims.

I have suggested elsewhere that it is simply a matter of respecting GT as it was intended and differentiating it from subsequent variations that have blurred the boundaries with other research approaches (Walsh et al., 2015a, 2015b). The emergent term 'grounded theorizing', I suggest, offers this possibility by allowing for an encompassing range of empirically grounded, inductive qualitative approaches. It is a term already well established in our field (Burgelman, 1985, 2009; Clarke and Freise, 2007; Langley, 1999; Locke, 2001, 2007; Pozzebon et al., 2011; Schatzman, 1991; Vaast and Walsham, 2013).

By reserving the term 'grounded theory' for works that respect GT's foundational pillars of emergence, theoretical sampling and constant comparison and that systematically employ its methodological principles, we can align with Walsh et al.'s (2015a) definition of GT as 'the systematic generation of theory from data that has itself been systematically obtained (Glaser, 1978:2). GT's exploratory approach may be adopted irrespective of the researcher's philosophical positioning. It may include qualitative or quantitative data, or both' (p. 626). Differentiating GT from 'grounded theorizing' in this way would help to resolve this seemingly persistent muddling of methodologies. Doing so would be particularly helpful for those new to research and theorizing. It might also assist in shifting the conversation in our discipline away from the rhetorical wrestle (Glaser, 1998) toward a greater appreciation of the inherent power of GT and its foundational contribution to the development of qualitative research in its many manifestations.

Notes

- 1 Throughout this chapter, the term 'GT' will be used in reference to the research process (the way the research is conducted) and the term 'grounded theory' in reference to the end result (the resultant theory of a GT study).
- 2 See Appendix A for an explanation of theoretical coding.
- 3 Charmaz (2006, 2014a) has distanced herself from theoretical integration via a core category in favour of what she terms 'greater scope' via 'focused codes'.
- 4 While Bryant and Charmaz (2007) have suggested that Glaser has 'distanced' himself from theoretical codes (p. 19), their claim is a puzzlement given his publication of *The Grounded Theory Perspective III: Theoretical Coding* (Glaser, 2005).

REFERENCE

- Annells, M. (1996). 'Grounded theory method: Philosophical perspectives, paradigm of inquiry, and postmodernism'. *Qualitative Health Research*, 6(3): 379–93.

- Birks, M. & Mills, J. (2011). *Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Birks, M. & Mills, J. (2015). *Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide* (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Brinkmann, S., Jacobsen, M.H. & Kristiansen, S. (2014). 'Historical overview of qualitative research in the social sciences'. In *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 17–42). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bryant, A. & Charmaz, K. (Eds) (2007). *The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory*. London: Sage.
- Burgelman, R.A. (1985). 'Applying the methodology of grounded theorizing in strategic management: A summary of recent findings and their implications'. In R. Lamb and P. Shrivastava (Eds), *Advances in Strategic Management*, Volume 3 (pp. 83–99). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Burgelman, R.A. (2009). 'Combining grounded theorizing and historical methods: A proposal to strengthen the power of qualitative research'. Research Paper No. 2045, *Stanford Research Paper Series*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University.
- Charmaz, K. (1994). 'Discovering chronic illness: Using grounded theory'. In B. G. Glaser (Ed.), *More Grounded Theory Methodology: A reader* (pp. 65–94). Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Charmaz, K. (2000). 'Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods'. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Charmaz, K. (2009). 'Shifting the grounds: Constructivist grounded theory methods'. In J.M. Morse, P.N. Stern, J. Corbin, B. Bowers, K. Charmaz and A.E. Clarke (Eds), *Developing Grounded Theory: The Second Generation* (pp.125–40). Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Charmaz, K. (2014a). *Constructing Grounded Theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Charmaz, K. (2014b). 'Grounded theory in global perspective reviews by international researchers'. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20(9): 1074–84.
- Charmaz, K. & Keller, R. (2016). 'A personal journey with grounded theory methodology: Kathy Charmaz in conversation with Reiner Keller', *Forum: Qualitative Sozialforschung/ Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 17(1). Retrieved 6 March 2016, from the World Wide Web: www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/2541/3936.
- Chen, X. (2016). 'Challenges and strategies of teaching qualitative research in China'. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 22(2): 72–86.
- Chia, R. (2002). 'The production of management knowledge: Philosophical underpinnings of research design'. In D. Partington (Ed.), *Essential Skills for Management Research* (pp. 1–19). London: Sage.
- Clarke, A.E. & Friese, C. (2007). 'Grounded theorizing using situational analysis'. In A. Bryant and K Charmaz (Eds), *The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory* (pp. 363–97). London: Sage.
- Corley, K.G. & Gioia, D.A. (2004). 'Identity ambiguity and change in the wake of a corporate spin-off'. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 49(2): 173–208.
- Creswell, J.W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds) (2011). *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Eaves, Y.D. (2001). 'A synthesis technique for grounded theory data analysis'. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 35(5): 654–63.
- Evans, G.L. (2013). 'A novice researcher's first walk through the maze of grounded theory: Rationalization for classic grounded theory'. *The Grounded Theory Review*, 12(1): 37–55.
- Fendt, J. & Sachs W. (2008). 'Grounded theory method in management research: Users' perspectives'. *Organizational Research Methods*, 11(3): 430–55.
- Gephart, R.P. (2004). 'Qualitative research and the Academy of Management Journal', *Academy of Management Journal*, 47(4): 454–62.
- Gibson, B. & Hartman, J. (2014). *Rediscovering Grounded Theory*. London: Sage.
- Gioia, D.A., Corley, K.G. & Hamilton, A.L. (2013). 'Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research notes on the Gioia methodology'.

- Organizational Research Methods*, 16(1): 15–31.
- Glaser, B.G. (1978). *Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B.G. (1992). *Basics of Grounded Theory: Emergence vs. Forcing*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B.G. (1998). *Doing Grounded Theory: Issues and Discussions*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B.G. (2001). *The Grounded Theory Perspective: Conceptualization Contrasted with Description*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B.G. (2002). 'Constructivist grounded theory?' *Forum: Qualitative sozialforschung/ Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 3(3). Retrieved 6 March 2016, from the World Wide Web: www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/825/1792.
- Glaser, B.G. (2003). *The Grounded Theory Perspective II: Description's Remodeling of Grounded Theory Methodology*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B.G. (2004). 'Naturalist inquiry and grounded theory'. *Forum: Qualitative Sozialforschung/ Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 5(1). Retrieved 6 March 2016, from the World Wide Web: www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/652/1412.
- Glaser, B.G. (2005). *The Grounded Theory Perspective III: Theoretical Coding*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B.G. (2007). *Doing Formal Grounded Theory*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B.G. (2008). *Doing Quantitative Grounded Theory*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B.G. (2009). *Jargonizing: Using the Grounded Theory Vocabulary*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B.G. (2011). *Getting Out of the Data: Grounded Theory Conceptualization*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B.G. (2013). *No Preconceptions: The Grounded Theory Dictum*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B.G. (2014). *Memoing: A Vital Grounded Theory Procedure*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B.G. & Holton, J. (2004). 'Remodeling grounded theory'. *Forum: Qualitative Sozialforschung/ Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 5(2). Retrieved 6 March 2016, from the World Wide Web: www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/607/1315.
- Glaser, B.G. & Strauss, A. (1965). *Awareness of Dying*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.
- Glaser, B.G. & Strauss, A.L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Gobo, G. (2008). 'Re-conceptualizing generalization: Old issues in a new frame'. In Pertti Alasuutari, Leonard Bickman & Julia Brannen (Eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Social Research Methods* (pp. 193–213). London: Sage.
- Gobo, G. (2011). 'Glocalizing methodology? The encounter between local methodologies'. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 14(6): 417–37.
- Goulding, C. (2002). *Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide for Management, Business and Market Researchers*. London: Sage.
- Holton, J.A. (2007). 'Rehumanizing knowledge work through fluctuating support networks: A grounded theory'. *The Grounded Theory Review*, 6(2): 23–46.
- Holton, J.A. (2008). 'Grounded theory as a general research methodology'. *The Grounded Theory Review*, 7(2): 67–93.
- Holton, J.A. & Walsh, I. (2017). *Classic Grounded Theory: Applications with Qualitative and Quantitative Data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hood, J.C. (2007). 'Orthodoxy vs. power: The defining traits of grounded theory'. In A. Bryant and K. Charmaz (Eds), *The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory* (pp. 151–64). London: Sage.
- Johnson, P. & Harris, D. (2002). 'Qualitative and quantitative issues in research design'. In D. Partington (Ed.), *Essential Skills for Management Research* (pp. 99–135). London: Sage.
- Jones, R. & Noble, G. (2007). 'Grounded theory and management research: A lack of integrity?' *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 2(2): 84–103.
- Kenealy, G. (2008). 'Management research and grounded theory: A review of grounded theory building approach in organisational and management research'. *The Grounded Theory Review*, 7(2): 95–117.
- Langley, A. (1999). 'Strategies for theorizing from process data'. *Academy of Management Review*, 24(4): 691–710.

- Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Locke, K. (2001). *Grounded Theory in Management Research*. London: Sage.
- Locke, K. (2007). 'Rational control and irrational free-play: Dual-thinking modes as necessary tension in grounded theorizing'. In A. Bryant and K. Charmaz (Eds), *The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory* (pp. 565–79). London: Sage.
- Locke, K. (2015). 'Pragmatic reflections on a conversation about grounded theory in management and organization studies'. *Organizational Research Methods*, 18(4): 612–19.
- Lomborg, K. and Kirkeveld, M. (2003). 'Truth and validity in grounded theory – A reconsidered realist interpretation of the criteria: Fit, work, relevance and modifiability'. *Nursing Philosophy*, 4(3): 189–200.
- Lowenberg, J.S. (1993). 'Interpretive research methodology: Broadening the dialogue'. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 16(2): 57–69.
- Marshall, C. & Rossman, G.B. (2016). *Designing Qualitative Research* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Morse, J.M. (Ed.). (1997). *Completing a Qualitative Research Project: Details and Dialogue*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Partington, D. (2000). 'Building grounded theories of management action'. *British Journal of Management*, 11(2): 91–102.
- Partington, D. (ed.) (2002). *Essential Skills for Management Research*. London: Sage.
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Patton, M.Q. (2015). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pettigrew, S. (2002). 'A grounded theory of beer consumption in Australia. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 5(2): 112–22.
- Pozzebon, M., Petrini, M., de Mello, R.B. & Garreau, L. (2011). 'Unpacking researchers' creativity and imagination in grounded theorizing: An exemplar from IS research'. *Information and Organization*, 21(4): 177–93.
- Raffanti, M. A. (2005). 'Weathering change: Coping in a context of pervasive organizational change'. *The Grounded Theory Review*, 5(1): 53–77.
- Redman-MacLaren, M. & Mills, J. (2015). 'Transformational grounded theory: Theory, voice, and action'. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 14(3): 1–12.
- Schatzman, L. (1991). 'Dimensional analysis: Notes on an alternative approach to the grounding of theory in qualitative research'. In D.R. Maines (Ed.), *Social Organization and Social Process: Essays in Honor of Anselm Strauss* (pp. 303–14). New York: Aldine De Gruyter.
- Stern, P.N. (1994). 'Eroding grounded theory'. In J.M. Morse (Ed.), *Critical Issues in Qualitative Research Methods* (pp. 212–23), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Strauss, A.L. & Corbin, J.M. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Strauss, A.L. & Corbin, J.M. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Thulesius, H. (2003). *Balancing Cancer from a Primary Care Perspective; Diagnosis, Post-traumatic Stress, and End-of-life Care*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Lund University, Malmo.
- Urquhart, C. (2013). *Grounded Theory for Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide*. London: Sage.
- Vaast, E. & Walsham, G. (2013). 'Grounded theorizing for electronically mediated social contexts'. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 22(1): 9–25.
- Walsh, I., Gettler-Summa, M. & Kalika, M. (2016). 'Expectable use: An important facet of IT usage'. *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 25(3): 177–210.
- Walsh, I., Holton, J.A., Bailyn, L., Fernandez, W., Levina, N. & Glaser, B. (2015a). 'Rejoinder: Moving the management field forward'. *Organizational Research Methods*, 18(4): 620–28.
- Walsh, I., Holton, J.A., Bailyn, L., Fernandez, W., Levina, N. & Glaser, B. (2015b). 'What grounded theory is ... a critically reflective conversation among scholars'. *Organizational Research Methods*, 18(4): 581–99.
- Xiao, J.Z., Dahya, J. & Lin, Z. (2004). 'A grounded theory exposition of the role of the supervisory board in China'. *British Journal of Management*, 15(1): 39–55.

APPENDIX A – CLASSIC GROUNDED THEORY METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

Glaser has articulated the essential elements that comprise classic GT methodology (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998; Glaser and Holton, 2004) and emphasizes that a study can only be considered a true grounded theory when the complete package is utilized. In addition to classic GT's foundational pillars of emergence, constant comparison and theoretical sampling as elaborated earlier in this chapter, essential methodological principles of classic GT are as follows (largely excerpted from Glaser and Holton, 2004):

THEORETICAL SENSITIVITY

Theoretical sensitivity, the ability to generate concepts from data and relate them according to normal models of theory in general, requires two things of the researcher. It requires, first of all, the personal temperament to maintain analytic distance and tolerate regression and confusion while trusting in preconscious processing and conceptual emergence. Second, theoretical sensitivity requires the ability to develop theoretical insight and conceptualize data.

GETTING STARTED

As a generative and emergent methodology, GT requires the researcher to remain open to discovering what is really going on in the field and not what should be going on according to extant theory or preconceived notions from the researcher's worldview. While the researcher will have an area of research interest, getting started in GT means entering the research field with no preconceived problem statement, interview protocols or review of literature but instead remaining open to the

discovery of a main concern in the area under study and its processing or resolution. Thus, forcing preconceived notions of an initial professional problem or a theoretical framework on the study is suspended in service to seeing what will emerge conceptually by constant comparative analysis.

USE OF THE LITERATURE

It is critical in classic GT methodology to avoid unduly preconceiving the study through extensive reading in the substantive area or forcing an extant theoretical framework on the collection and analysis of data. To undertake an extensive review of literature before the emergence of a core category violates the basic premise of GT – that the theory emerges from the data, not from extant theory. Subject expertise also increases the risk of clouding the researcher's ability to remain open to the emergence of a completely new core category that has not figured prominently in the research to date. Practically, it may well result in the researcher spending valuable time on an area of literature that proves to be of little significance to the emergent grounded theory. Instead, GT treats the literature as another source of data to be integrated into the constant comparative analysis process once the core category, its properties and related categories have emerged and the basic conceptual development is well underway.

ALL IS DATA

This dictum expresses the flexibility of GT in utilizing all types and sources of data as opposed to a focus on one specific type of data. The grounded theorist uses all data that are available. The richer the range of data, the greater the potential for producing multivariate theory. 'Preconceiving what data will be used for a study severely restricts the generative

aspect of the study and consequently the theory' (Glaser, 1998: 9). While GT welcomes the use of any type of data, it is important to recognize that some data collection methods (e.g. interviews following a pre-defined protocol) and analysis techniques (e.g. pre-defined codes or themes) commonly associated with qualitative research contradict GT's fundamental principle of emergence.

OPEN CODING

The conceptualization of data through coding is the foundation of GT development. The essential relationship between data and theory is a conceptual code. Incidents articulated in the data are analysed and coded, using the constant comparative method, to generate initially substantive, and later theoretical, categories. Coding conceptualizes the underlying pattern of a set of empirical indicators within the data, enabling the researcher to transcend the empirical level by fracturing the data to give the researcher a condensed, abstract view of the data that includes otherwise seemingly disparate phenomena.

To begin open coding – with a minimum of preconception – tests the researcher's ability to trust in herself, the method and her skill to use the method to generate codes and find relevance. The process begins with open coding of incidents as indicators of substantive codes emergent within the data. The researcher begins by coding the data in every way possible – 'running the data open' (Glaser, 1978: 56). From the start, the researcher asks a set of questions of the data – 'What is this data a study of?', 'What category does this incident indicate?', 'What is actually happening in the data?' (Glaser, 1978: 57). These questions keep the researcher theoretically sensitive when analysing, collecting and coding the data. They force her to focus on patterns among incidents that yield codes and to conceptually transcend the detailed description of these incidents while remaining focused on trying to ascertain a main concern

in the area under study and discovering what accounts for the continual resolution of this concern by coding for as many categories as fit successive, different incidents. As coding progresses, new categories emerge and new incidents fit into existing categories.

Open coding allows the researcher to see the direction in which to take the study by theoretical sampling before she has become selective and focused on a particular problem. Thus, when she does begin to focus, she is sure of relevance. The researcher begins to see the kind of categories that can handle the data theoretically, so that she knows how to code all data, ensuring that the emergent theory fits and works. Open coding incident by incident forces the researcher to verify and saturate categories, minimizing the omission of an important category and ensuring the grounding of categories in the data. The result is a rich, dense theory with the feeling that nothing of relevance has been left out. It also corrects the forcing of 'pet' themes and ideas, unless they have emergent fit. It is essential that the researcher does her own coding as coding constantly stimulates ideas.

INTERCHANGEABILITY OF INDICATORS

GT is based on a concept-indicator model (Glaser, 1978: 62) of *conceptual specification* (p. 64) through constant comparisons of incidents to incidents and, once conceptual codes are generated, of incidents to emerging concepts. This ensures that the researcher confronts similarities, differences and degrees in consistency of meaning between indicators, generating an underlying uniformity which, in turn, results in a coded category and the beginnings of the properties of that category. Interchangeability produces saturation of concepts and their properties (Glaser, 1978: 62–5). From the comparisons of further incidents to the conceptual codes, the code is sharpened to achieve its best fit while further

properties are generated until the code is verified and saturated. Conceptual specification, not definition, is the focus of GT. The GT concept-indicator model requires concepts and their dimensions to earn their way into the theory by systematic generation of data. Comparing in new incidents and thereby generating new properties of a code can only go so far before the researcher discovers saturation of ideas through interchangeability of indicators (incidents). This interchangeability produces, at the same time, the transferability of the theory to other areas by linking to incidents (indicators) in other substantive or sub-substantive areas that produce the same category or properties of it.

CORE CATEGORY

As the researcher proceeds to compare incident to incident in the data, then incidents to categories, she develops several workable coded categories and begins, as much as possible, to saturate those that seem to have explanatory power. A main concern begins to emerge, with a core category that appears to account for most of the variation around this main issue or concern as the focus of the study, explaining how this issue or concern is continually processed or resolved. The core concept becomes the focus of further selective data collection and coding efforts. This core category is always some type of theoretical code; e.g. a process, a continuum, typology, dimensions, a range and so forth. Its primary function is to integrate (i.e. conceptually model) the theory. The core category reoccurs frequently in the data and comes to be seen as a stable pattern that is increasingly related to other concepts. The criteria for establishing the core category are that it is central, that it relates to as many other categories and their properties as possible and that it accounts for a large portion of the variation in a pattern of behaviour. It relates meaningfully and easily with other

categories. It has clear and ‘grabbing’ implications for further formal theoretical elaboration, beyond the initial substantive area.

SELECTIVE CODING

The emergence of a core category marks the beginning of selective coding. Selective coding begins only after the researcher is sure that she has discovered the core category. The researcher ceases open coding and delimits coding to only those concepts relevant to the emerging conceptual framework in sufficiently significant ways, so as to produce a parsimonious theory. This selective data collection and analysis continues until the researcher has sufficiently elaborated and integrated the core category, its properties and its theoretical connections to other relevant concepts.

DELIMITING

Integration of a theory around a core category delimits the theory and thereby the study. This delimitation occurs at two levels – the theory and the categories. First, the theory solidifies, in the sense that major modifications become fewer and fewer as the researcher compares the next incidents of a category to its properties. Later modifications are mainly about clarifying the logic, taking out non-relevant properties, integrating elaborating details of properties into the major outline of interrelated categories and – most important – reduction.

The second level of delimiting the theory is a reduction in the original list of categories for coding. As the development of the theory progresses and it becomes reduced by delimiting, it increasingly works better for ordering a mass of qualitative data and the researcher becomes committed to it. The researcher discovers underlying uniformity in the set of categories and their properties and then

reformulates the theory with a smaller set of higher-level concepts. This allows her to pare down the original list of categories for collecting and coding data, according to the present boundaries of the theory. She now focuses on one category as the core category and only concepts related to the core variable will be included in the theory. The list of categories for coding is further delimited through theoretical saturation.

MEMOING

The writing of theoretical memos is a core stage in the process of generating grounded theory that parallels the coding process by capturing the researcher's emergent theoretical ideas. Memos are the researcher's theoretical notes about the data and the conceptual connections between emerging categories. If the researcher skips this stage by going directly to sorting or writing up, after coding, she is not doing GT.

Memo writing is a continual process that helps raise the data to a conceptual level and develop the properties of each category. Memos also guide the next steps in further data collection, coding and analysis. They present hypotheses about connections between categories and their properties and begin the integration of these connections with clusters of other categories to generate a theory. The basic goal of memoing is to develop ideas with complete freedom and to collect these in a 'memo bank' for later sorting. Memos slow a researcher's pace, forcing her to reason through and verify categories, their integration and fit, relevance and work for the theory. In this way, she does not prematurely draw conclusions about the final theoretical framework and core concepts.

Memo construction differs from writing detailed description. Although typically based on description, memos raise the description to a theoretical level through conceptual rendering of the material. As codes conceptualize

the data, the original description is subsumed by the analysis. Memos reveal and relate the properties of substantive codes – drawing and filling out analytic properties of the descriptive data. Initially, memos arise from the constant comparison of indicators to indicators, then indicators to concepts. Later memos generate new memos. Reading literature generates memos; sorting and writing also generate memos. In GT, memoing is never done!

THEORETICAL CODING

While substantive codes conceptualize the empirical substance of the area of research, theoretical codes are abstract models or frameworks that conceptualize how the substantive codes may relate to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into a theory. As such, theoretical codes give integrative scope, broad pictures and a new perspective. They help the analyst maintain the conceptual level in writing about concepts and their interrelations.

SORTING AND WRITING UP

Once the core category and related concepts have been theoretically saturated, the researcher proceeds to review and hand sort memos looking for an emergent organization (theoretical code) that integrates the theory by accounting for the relationships between the core and related concepts as a set of conceptual hypotheses. Hand sorting requires the researcher to thoughtfully consider where each concept fits and works, its relevance and how it will carry forward in the cumulative development of the theory. Hand sorting also generates more memos – often on higher conceptual levels – further integrating the theory as a parsimonious set of concepts. It is at this point as well that the relevant literature can be introduced into the theory as more data to be memoed and added in with the memo sorting.

This theoretical sorting of memos is the key to the formulation of the theory for presentation or writing. Sorting is essential – it puts the fractured data back together, making theoretical discriminations as to where each idea fits in the emerging theory. There are no preconceived outlines. To preconceive a theoretical outline is to risk logical elaboration (Glaser, 1978: 118) with the outcome lacking ‘the internal integration of connections among a great many categories’ (Glaser, 1978: 116).

ANALYTIC RULES DEVELOPED THROUGH SORTING

While theoretical coding establishes the relationships among concepts, analytic rules guide the construction of the theory as it emerges. Glaser (1978) and Glaser and Holton (2004) detail several fundamental analytic rules which are summarized here. First, sorting can start anywhere. It will find its own beginning, middle and end for writing. The important thing is to start. Once started, the researcher soon learns where ideas are likely to integrate best and sorting becomes generative and fun.

Starting with the core category and then sorting all other concepts and properties only as they relate to the core requires focus, selectivity and delimiting, with further constant comparisons likely to generate many new ideas, especially on potential theoretical codes for organizing and integrating the overall theory. The researcher stops sorting and memos ideas, then sorts the memo into the integration. All ideas must fit in somewhere or the integration must be changed or modified. This is essential, for ignoring this fitting of all related

categories will lead the researcher to break out of the theory too soon, with important ideas and relationships ignored.

If the researcher cannot find the integration, memos must be re-sorted and re-integrated for better fit, forcing underlying patterns, integrations and multivariate relations between the concepts to emerge. The process is intensely generative. Theoretical completeness implies theoretical coverage by requiring the researcher to explain the behaviour and issue under study with the fewest possible concepts, the greatest possible scope and with as much variation as possible to sufficiently explain how the main concern is continually processed or resolved with concepts that fit, work and have relevance.

PACING

Generation of a GT takes time. It is a delayed action phenomenon (Glaser, 1978: 6; 2003: 78). Little increments of data collection, coding and analysis build, mature and emerge as theoretical memos. Significant theoretical realizations come with growth and maturity in the data, and much of this is outside the researcher’s conscious awareness until a preconscious processing facilitates its conscious emergence (Glaser, 1998: 50). The researcher must exercise patience, accepting nothing until this inevitable emergence through preconscious processing has transpired. Confusion is inevitable and must be tolerated with persistence and trust in the discovery process. Rushing or forcing the process will shut down the researcher’s creativity and conceptual abilities, producing a theory that is thin and incomplete.

PART II

Research Designs



This page intentionally left blank

Researching Bodies: Embodied Fieldwork for Knowledge Work, Which Turns Out to Be Embodied

Alexandra Michel

INTRODUCTION

Our economy has changed from predominantly industrial to knowledge-based. For example, all net new jobs that were created during the last decade were knowledge-based. Knowledge-based jobs now amount to more than 40 percent of all work (Manyika et al., 2012). Knowledge work, such as banking, consulting, accounting, and software engineering, uses knowledge as an input and output and employs highly educated and qualified workers, who work on intellectual tasks (Alvesson, 2004). With the advent of the knowledge economy, new work practices are emerging that challenge our understanding of how organizations control and thereby change participants, which is the management discipline's 'most fundamental problem' (Van Maanen & Barley, 1984, p. 290) and central topic (Pfeffer, 1997). Understanding these new work practices requires qualitative research, but here, too, innovations are needed in response to the changing empirical phenomenon.

Challenging our discipline's foundational ideas is a trend toward all-encompassing work schedules. A traditional employee might have worked 40 or 60 hours per week, leaving time to participate meaningfully with – and be socialized by – other communities. In contrast, knowledge workers such as software engineers (Kunda, 1992), consultants (Perlow, 2012), and doctors (Kellogg, 2011) can work up to 120 hours per week and are electronically available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week (Mazmanian et al., 2005). They are wrapped up in an 'always-on' mentality even when they are not actually working, leaving little time for friends, family, participation in outside communities, and even sleep, as exemplified in the following excerpt about work at the internet retailer Amazon:

At Amazon, workers ... toil long and late (emails arrive past midnight, followed by text messages asking why they were not answered), and held to standards that the company boasts are 'unreasonably high' ... the company ... is conducting a little-known experiment in how far it can push white-collar

workers, redrawing the boundaries of what is acceptable ... Bo Olson (a former employee) ... said that his enduring image was watching people weep in the office, a sight other workers described as well. ... 'Nearly every person I worked with, I saw cry at their desk.' ... One time I didn't sleep for four days straight,' said Dina Vaccari. ... One ex-employee's fiancé became so concerned about her nonstop working night after night that he would drive to the Amazon campus at 10 p.m. and dial her cellphone until she agreed to come home. When they took a vacation to Florida, she spent every day at Starbucks using the wireless connection to get work done. ... 'That's when the ulcer started,' she said ... 'I would see people practically combust,' (said) Liz Pearce, (who) worked on Amazon's wedding registry. (Kantor & Streifeldaug, 2015)

Similarly, a consultant summarizes the all-encompassing commitment that knowledge-based organizations extract:

There's a correlation between success and the willingness to just put everything else aside and do a ton of work. People here are probably doing 14, 15 hours of work a day. Pretty much just working and sleeping during the week. They sleep 6 hours a night or less. ... Your ability to get by on little sleep is a necessary skill set. (Padavic et al., 2013, p. 7, emphasis added)

Dominated by a cognitive approach, management scholars conceptualize organizational influence primarily as a change in participants' minds. In this view, when people enter into an organization, they learn concepts, including subject matter knowledge, values, norms, and identities, which are self-concepts. This cognitive approach to persons may appear particularly relevant to knowledge work, which presumably involves 'thinking for a living' (Davenport, 2005). Yet, clearly, for the Amazon workers above, who 'combust' and have ulcers, more is changing than merely what they know. But the cognitive approach does not have sensitizing concepts for asking research questions about a more encompassing, embodied transformation through work – what else could possibly change in people, in their bodies, as they become skillful organizational members? – and for designing effective studies to answer such questions.

To understand how organizations transform participants holistically, I outline an embodied research approach, which uses a novel set of sensitizing concepts and methods. This approach introduces a different conceptualization of what the body is and what data to gather about it. It is not only a biological thing with universally occurring processes, but a fluid aspect of a culturally and historically situated economic complex, molded by and continuously reproducing a specific set of organizational practices. Because the body changes, and is changed by, the specific organizational practices that it is entangled in, we cannot utilize the decontextualized medical measures that organizational scholars currently use to include the body in their theories, such as stress data, but instead need to study the body within its organizational context.

Ethnographic fieldwork, short 'ethnography', is ideally suited for this purpose, but requires new tools, which I introduce. Ethnography is the collection of naturalistic social science data through immersion. It entails the scholar entering a cultural context, such as an organization, and writing down what he or she observes, with the goal of understanding the concepts, meanings, and symbolic tools that informants use (e.g. Geertz, 1979). Ethnography thus affords the needed contextualized perspective. To supplement this prevailing semiotic approach to ethnography, which focuses on meaning-making, I propose an embodied approach. Briefly, a powerful method for discovering what changes in participants through their organizational tenure and how uses the body of the researcher – the researching body – as an instrument for researching bodies. It involves immersing the analyst as deeply and for as long in the field as possible, 'going native', but armed with sensitizing concepts and rigorous methods. This embodied approach to ethnography involves a change from participant observation to observant participation; from 'being there' to 'becoming them'.

HOW ORGANIZATIONS TRANSFORM PERSONS

The Predominant Cognitive Approach

From its inception, the management discipline has accepted a cognitive imaginary. An imaginary is an internally consistent way of thinking about and researching persons, organizations, and their interrelation. In order to turn the natural person into an analytic entity, scholars have to make a decision about what aspects of the person matter most for explaining the discipline's focal phenomena. Not everything about the person can be included in an analytic conception. Such aspects as hair color and eye form, for example, are irrelevant and, therefore, do not become part of the analytic conceptualization. Influenced by the cognitive revolution in psychology, of which the organizational discipline's founding members (e.g. March & Simon, 1958; Simon, 1976) were a part, much of the organizational discipline has adopted an 'unabashed commitment to mentalism' (Fiske & Taylor, 1991, p. 14), which entails conceptualizing the person in terms of the mind and its content, such as concepts.

I refer to an organizational imaginary because this cognitive conceptualization of the person entails specific, and it turns out limiting, ways of conceptualizing and researching the organization and how it influences participants. Because the analytic person consists of concepts, it follows that the organization influences the individual primarily by changing these concepts. For example, socialization research examines the kinds of skills and knowledge that participants gain when they enter into organizations (e.g. Chao et al., 1994), culture research investigates how organizations influence participants' values and norms (e.g. O'Reilly & Chatman, 1996), and identity scholars study the internal 'cognitive structures', such as identities, through which contemporary organizations control participants, replacing

the external controls prevalent in industrial organizations, such as hierarchies and direct supervision (Albert et al., 2000).

Because the cognitive approach assumes that the person, reduced to the mind, is conceptually separate from the context, with which it only interacts, scholars can study the person and the context separately. This conceptual separation of person and context, too, is adopted from cognitive psychology, which assumes that basic psychological processes are universal (Higgins & Kruglanski, 1996; Molden & Dweck, 2006). The universality assumption means that psychological processes are not affected substantively by a given context. Since the context does not matter, researchers can study participants in the supposedly neutral environment of the laboratory. For organizational researchers, the analytic separability of person and context means, for example, that behavioral or micro-scholars can study the person in isolation, adding this knowledge to the findings of macro-scholars, who study the organizational context in the form of strategy, organizational design, or routines.

Why Organizational Scholarship Needs an Embodied Approach

Organizational scholars treat the cognitive conceptualization of the person as context-free. They do not explicitly assess the boundary conditions under which this conceptualization is more or less useful. Intuitively, it makes sense that traditional organizations primarily affected participants' concepts, partly because the socialization influence of these organizations was too limited to restructure the person more comprehensively. This boundary condition, limited socializing influence, does not hold in the contemporary 'greedy' or 'omnivorous' knowledge-based organizations (Coser, 1967), which 'seek to make total claims on their members ... reduc[ing] the claims of competing roles and status positions on those they encompass within their boundaries'

(Coser, 1967, p. 4). Such all-encompassing influence – a historically new phenomenon, especially for highly educated workers – renders organizations unusually powerful ‘forcing houses for changing the self’ (Goffman, 1961, p. 12), which means that they reshape the person more profoundly and comprehensively than merely a change in skills and concepts. Because they have the power to cut off the person from alternative socializing influences, contemporary knowledge-based organizations do not have the traditional status of an organization in a person’s life, as a culture among cultures. They are more like the meta-cultures studied by anthropologists, with a similar ability to influence the individual holistically, ‘down’ to the biological, embodied level. This meta-cultural status of organizations in participants’ lives invites a revised imaginary, starting with an embodied conceptualization of the person.

The biological level, such as endocrinology, is often viewed as a ‘brute, precultural [and therefore universal] fact’ (Geertz, 1973). In contrast, more recent research in anthropology shows that cultures restructure persons at the level of the body, suggesting that one should talk about ‘biologies, not biology, and that they are literally local’ (Worthman, 1995, p. 11). Unlike the medical concept of the ‘body’, which is a biological thing exhibiting genetically determined features that follow a universal logic, I use ‘embodiment’ to refer to the cultural modulation of the body (cf. Csordas, 1990). Studying the body permits the usage of medical data, while studying embodiment renders such decontextualized data problematic.

Contemporary knowledge-based organizations are where local biologies are produced. Engaging participants in organizationally structured activities for most of their waking hours, organizations influence how participants eat, sleep, how much and how they move, how they sit, for instance tensed with their spines bent around computers, and the kinds of stressors people encounter. For example, my ethnographic data collection, which is now in year fifteen, shows that

bankers, who often worked up to 100 hours per week, incurred similar work-related illnesses at similar points in their organizational tenure, such as chronic pain, exhaustion, and endocrine disorders that doctors had rarely seen before, especially in people in their twenties (e.g. Michel, 2011), indicating that biology can manifest in new ways in new cultural-historical conditions.

This means that person and context are not conceptually separate; they do not interact, but are mutually constituted. A person’s psychology and embodiment are shaped by the socio-material features of a context and reproduce these features in action. For example, because of their work, bankers developed embodied dispositions, such as the ability to sit for a prolonged period of time, which reproduced the practice that generated these dispositions in the first place. Because even young bodies wear out rapidly through prolonged, tense sitting and sleep deprivation, the banks had to design a workaround set of practices that accounts for the bodies’ limitations. Through cohort-based hiring they pumped in ‘new blood’ every year, replacing exhausted bankers, who leave in their mid-thirties, after a tenure of only about seven years.

Similarly, Bourdieu (1977) documented how in Kabyle society men work in trees and women pick up the branches that fall down. This simple division of labor structures participants’ cognitive and embodied dispositions in ways that reinforce the practices that created the dispositions. Men are upright and above women. Women are stooped, in a bent physical position that leaves lasting traces on their posture, such that they embody the societal gender hierarchy. While men proactively conquer the natural environment through their strength and have an expansive view, women’s perceptual field is narrowed. Their physiology and psychology are trained to be reactive to the narrow set of cues emitted by men, which prompt a narrow and routinized set of responses that do not require, and therefore do not develop, strength. This

example indicates that work shapes the person holistically and in highly context-specific ways.

Together, these examples illustrate the complexity confronting organizational researchers as they seek to arrive at a more suitable conceptualization of the person, the organization, and the latter's influence on the former. While the cognitive approach assumes a priori what aspects of the person are analytically relevant, namely the mind, the examples show that the particular aspects of the person that matter depend on the attributes of a specific context. For example, in Kabyle society, but not in investment banking, gender-specific body postures mattered. The societal division of labor influenced differential gender posture to maintain the society's gendered ideology. Organizational scholars do not know (1) what aspects of the person are shaped through knowledge work, (2) how, and (3) how this influence evolves over time.

The examples also illustrate that the operative aspects of the organizational context cannot be claimed a priori, but need to be empirically demonstrated. Organizational research assumes that organizations influence participants through well-known activities and structures that are designed for this purpose, such as socialization activities, culture, or organizational routines. Moreover, this influence is exerted by the powerful, such as top management, to influence the comparatively less powerful lower-level employees. In contrast, Bourdieu's example shows how practices can affect participants, without being designed to do so. There is not one powerful entity, such as top management, that created these practices to submit or socialize the less powerful. Rather, both the powerful and the powerless keep reproducing these practices because they cannot conceive of acting in any other way.

Similarly, my research (e.g. Michel, 2011) shows that participants are shaped by a web of diffuse and overlapping practices that are not necessarily designed for the purposes

that they end up having. For example, one investment bank moved senior bankers out of their offices to sit next to junior bankers in an environment of hip-high cubicles. This practice was designed to facilitate learning. Junior bankers were supposed to benefit from overhearing senior bankers' conversation. The unintended consequence was the intensification of work pace. Both junior and senior bankers worked harder because now everyone could watch everyone else. Working hours also escalated as the unintended consequence of practices that were designed for the opposite purpose. Namely, banks offered amenities such as free meals and free car service if bankers stayed after 6 pm, child care, and valet services for dry cleaning. These practices were designed to unburden bankers from chores so that they had more leisure. The unintended consequence was that bankers worked even more because it was now more convenient to do so, contributing to their subsequent physical breakdowns. These examples indicate that all organizational practices can influence participant behavior (and biology), not merely those that are explicitly designed to do so. Yet we do not have any guidance on how to identify consequential person-shaping activities, which is a necessary first step toward updating our understanding of organizational control.

In summary, the above examples show the reciprocal formation of the embodied person and the historically situated context, which is invisible to a cognitive approach because it overlooks the body and relies on such sensitizing concepts as 'interaction' that steer research toward decontextualized methods.

An Embodied Approach

Sensitizing concepts: Habitus

The first step toward generating a better understanding is to develop a set of sensitizing concepts for conceptualizing the person in a holistic, embodied, and contextualized

way, such as the *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977). The habitus is a set of acquired embodied cognitive structures that are mutually constituted with contextual structures. Bourdieu (1977, p. 53) defined it as ‘structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures’. It lets persons experience reality in ways that fit with the social structures that they participate in and predisposes them to actions that generate and maintain these structures, without perceiving their choices as such. Habitus captures the mutual constitution of person and context because the person’s dispositions are shaped by context – ‘structured (cognitive) structures’ – and also generate the context – ‘structuring (contextual) structures’.

Habitus allows us to understand the relation between the person and the organization in non-cognitive ways. It suggests that the practical mastery of a participant does not come from knowing a discrete set of mental concepts, but is prediscursive and embodied. The knowledge that people need to do their jobs comes not from learning a finite sum of discrete explicit information that gets transmitted through words. Instead, as the Kabyle work practices described above illustrated, organizations shape people by kinetically reeducating and remodeling the body to fit the situation at hand. People learn a body–mind–tool complex, a diffuse repertoire of body techniques, wants, and physical and mental gestures that fit with particular situational affordances, such as tools.

Prediscursive knowledge is different from tacit knowledge. For example, we stand at a culturally appropriate distance from others and, usually without realizing it, calibrate for noise, smell, and situational formality. People can only self-report on distance standing incompletely, not because concepts are tacit but because they do not have the requisite concepts (Taylor, 1993).

The habitus directs research methodology differently. Because a person’s dispositions are shaped by the specific aspects of a context and reproduce those features, in turn,

the person cannot be studied in a laboratory, but must be studied within a given context, as ethnographic fieldwork is uniquely suited to do. Because the habitus is context-specific, organizational researchers cannot simply apply the presumably universally valid principles of cognitive psychology to understand action in organization. Quite the contrary. It is upon organizational scholars to contribute toward a basic science of human functioning, but with a different aim, which entails understanding human plasticity, as opposed to universal human fixity. Because the essence of what fieldworkers are studying is prediscursive and embodied, new fieldwork methods are needed, which I introduce next.

New Fieldwork Methods: Embodied Ethnography

I propose ethnographic fieldwork, or ‘ethnography’, as an ideal method for developing a more accurate understanding of how organizations affect participants holistically. But to fit the purpose at hand, important modifications are needed to our standard practices. I first explicate the need for the innovations that I will then introduce in this chapter’s final section.

Ethnography entails a specific approach to social science and a set of methods. ‘Fieldwork’ can refer to any naturalistic data collection activity, meaning a data collection in a real-life setting, and can be used regardless of a researcher’s ontological and epistemological assumptions. For example, a botanist conducts fieldwork by studying flowers in a garden. In contrast, ethnography is based on the assumption that a social scientist stands in a different relation to the object of study, as compared to a natural scientist. While the natural scientist can be a mere observer, the social scientist must be a ‘fellow participant’ in social practice (Winch, 1956, p. 31). The term ‘ethnography’ refers both to the scholarly investigation and the written report produced from it. A further

basic assumption underlying ethnography, congenial to my project at hand, is that it entails a '[s]pecial scientific description of a people and the cultural basis of their peoplehood' (Vidich & Lyman, 2000), responding to traditional psychology, which assumes that much of what matters about a person's make-up has a universal, not a cultural, basis.

While ethnography is used across disciplines, it has been 'at the heart of cultural anthropology' (Marcus, 1994, p. 42) since its inception, resulting in a high refinement of ethnographic methods by anthropologists. Scholars from other disciplines, such as organizational scholars, often learn about ethnography through classes or textbooks that decontextualize it from the original anthropological setting, presenting it as an unproblematic set of practices. Briefly, these methods involve that one enters into a cultural setting for a prolonged period of time ('immersion'), participates in daily activities, and writes down what one observes. The typical class or book on ethnographic methods gives tips on how one obtains access, establishes rapport, chooses one's role along the participation and observation continuum, conducts interviews, as well as records and analyzes field notes. However, it turns out that ethnographic methods have structured into them assumptions that are specific to the prototypical cultural-anthropological setting, which involves the study of an exotic culture. These assumptions do not hold in the contemporary knowledge-based setting, requiring a revision in ethnographic methods that will be my focus.

The Specialized Problematic of the Prototypical Anthropological Setting: Unbridgeable Cultural Distance

To demonstrate the culturally contingent diversity of human psychology, ethnographers need settings that together constitute maximum cultural variation. Therefore, the

traditional approach to ethnography involves the anthropologist studying an exotic culture, such as the Trobriand Islands in Melanesia (Malinowski, 1922) or Bali (Geertz, 1972). While the goal of traditional psychology is deductive, testing the concepts that the psychologist has developed, anthropology uses a discovery epistemology (Locke, 2011), aiming to uncover informants' concepts. For instance, Malinowski argued that 'the final goal of anthropology' was 'to grasp the native's point of view, *his* relation to life, to realize *his* vision of his world' (1922, p. 25, emphasis in original). Anthropologists thus immerse themselves in the cultural setting, aiming to obtain full membership.

However, while studying exotic societies is ideal for documenting cultural diversity, these settings also have a fatal flaw, namely an unbridgeable cultural distance between the scholar and the informant, which makes it impossible for the scholar to fully capture 'the insider's viewpoint' (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 14), anthropology's final goal. This distance exists because the anthropologist has not been born into the informants' culture, has no desire to convert to it, and has none of the constraints that informants have (Bittner, 1973). Malinowski argued that this distance could be minimized through a special kind of empathy with informants:

I had to learn how to behave, and to a certain extent, I acquired the 'feeling' for native good and bad manners...*I began to feel that I was indeed in touch with the natives, and this is certainly the preliminary condition of being able to carry on successful fieldwork.* (Malinowski, 1922, p. 8, emphasis added)

However, when his diary (Malinowski, 1967) was published post-mortem, it turned out that far from being sensitively attuned to informants, he viewed them with disparaging detachment.

While Malinowski's diary created moral outrage, Geertz (1976, p. 236) recognized this situation as primarily an epistemological problem:

[I]f anthropological fieldwork does not stem, as we have been taught to believe, from some sort of extraordinary sensibility, an almost preternatural capacity to think, feel, and perceive like a native (a word that I should hurry to say, I use here 'in the strictest sense of the term'), then how is anthropological knowledge of the way natives think, feel, and perceive possible?

He proposed that instead of aiming to attain informants' sensibilities, the anthropologist should study their symbolic system, 'searching out and analyzing the symbolic forms – words, images, institutions, behaviors – in terms of which in each case, people actually represent themselves to themselves and to one another' (Geertz, 1976, p. 228), data that is publicly observable. In summary, the prevailing semiotic approach to ethnography, which focuses on meaning, is not a 'positive' design choice, but a compromise. Because ethnographers could not bridge the cultural distance between them and their informants, they gave up the quest to feel themselves into their informants.

The prototypical anthropological study, which involves the anthropologist visiting an exotic setting, also generates another research practice that we now take for granted, namely that the scholar ought to generate field notes with the aim of 'fixing' culture, generating a static 'snapshot' of a given culture at a given point in time (Erickson, 2002). Because the anthropologist could not undergo the same induction into the culture as the informants, who were born into it, the scholar's transformation to full membership was not informative about the native's transformation process, moving the study of the cultural transformation of the person into the background of our collective research agenda.

By unreflectively using the methods of traditional ethnography, organizational scholars are unwittingly adopting the underlying assumptions that generated these methods, even though these assumptions do not hold in the prototypical organizational setting, and are limited unnecessarily by anthropologists' constraints. Contemporary knowledge

work differs from the exotic cultures of the anthropologist in consequential ways. Most importantly, organizational scholars do not encounter the unbridgeable cultural distance that constrains the cultural anthropologist. Organizational scholars *are* knowledge workers with a similar educational background as their informants and engaged in similar work practices. Moreover, like the scholar, informants are not born into but enter the organizational culture under study. This means that the organizational scholar can come very close to achieving the anthropological ideal of 'becoming one of them'. Consequently, I revisit the semiotic approach, which focuses only on the mind and neglects the body, and the 'snapshot' approach to studying culture in favor of an embodied transformational approach, outlined next.

OBSERVANT PARTICIPATION: FROM 'BEING THERE' TO 'BECOMING THEM'

One particularly promising method for understanding how organizations change participants at a prediscursive, embodied level is for the analyst to undergo these changes, as a professional apprentice (Van Maanen & Kolb, 1985) to a particular culture. Equipped with sensitizing concepts and methods, the scholar can identify dynamics that escape participants' untrained experience by documenting changes in the self in real time, as they are unfolding in response to specific situations. In contrast to the more familiar participant observation, which merely involves 'being there', this observant participation involves 'becoming them'.

Wacquant (2004), one of Bourdieu's students, exemplified this approach when he became an apprentice boxer. Cultural scholars have argued that apprenticeship is the primary mode of social knowledge transmission (e.g. Lave & Wenger, 1991). People acquire practical mastery not through learning decontextualized concepts, but by being engaged in

a culture's practices with the goal to become a socially recognizable kind of person, such as a banker or scholar. Building on this insight, Wacquant transformed apprenticeship into a technique of social inquiry, but in novel ways that are informed by the habitus as a sensitizing construct.

Traditionally, when ethnographers use apprenticeship, they do so to obtain better information from informants, to better understand informants' subjective experience (e.g. Van Maanen & Kolb, 1985, p. 36). This function of apprenticeship is based on a set of ontological assumptions, namely semiotic ones, which view culture as consisting of text-like concepts, human beings as meaning-making, and the aim of anthropology as interpretation (e.g. Geertz, 1973). In contrast, Wacquant (2003) underwent apprenticeship to construct and empirically elaborate different ontological assumptions, according to which the most consequential elements of culture are prediscursive and, therefore, unlike texts, and which acknowledge human beings as also embodied. Therefore, one important aim becomes bringing embodiment into the foreground of culture and learning, construing bodies as both socially structured and socially structuring.

Observant participation differs from 'going native' (Adler et al., 1986, p. 364) or conducting an 'autoethnography'. In North American organizational research, 'going native' is a problem because the deep immersion that it entails makes it likely that the scholar loses *axiological neutrality* (Weber, 2004, p. 22), which is the desirable ability to detach oneself from the focal phenomenon. A scholar who immerses the self might depict the setting in more favorable ways than merited, or share in informants' taken-for-grantedness, coming to 'know the rules of the game so deeply' that one 'never even notice(s) that there are rules' (Luker, 2008, p. 157). Observant participation does involve going native, but doing so while armed with the concepts and methods of the discipline as one enters the setting. Equipped with the concept

of habitus, observant participation capitalizes on the evolving taken-for-grantedness that will occur as the scholar is immersed in a setting; it is not a distraction, but the focal phenomenon. It is how the most influential forms of organizational influence act on the person. In contrast to the participants, who undergo this transformation non-reflexively, the scholar can use methods to understand this transformation as it occurs. All ethnographers can use methods for detaching the self from a setting to restore neutrality (Anteby, 2013). Observant participation thus primarily differs from other forms of ethnography in that it utilizes the co-presence of the ethnographer with other informants as a tool for doing so.

Observant participation differs in a variety of ways from autoethnography conducted as a social science (e.g. Anteby, 2013). Autoethnography can also be conducted in non-scientific ways, as I discuss below. One, social science autoethnography, consists of selective 'collections of autobiographical reflections on past projects', such as confessional tales (van Maanen, 2011, p. 82). In contrast, observant participation unfolds in real time and is not selective. One has to capture all of the changes in the self as they occur. Similar to how one takes notes about a social context, the comprehensiveness of the record matters because only ongoing analysis reveals which aspects constitute data, as opposed to noise. The ongoing analysis of experience also allows one to steer this experience, sampling purposefully as one would with studying a context.

For example, my investment banking informants experimented with ways to redesign their physiological needs to make themselves more productive, such as using a polyphasic approach to sleep in which they only slept for twenty minutes or so at a time (Michel, 2011). Normally, a scholar who enters a setting deeply, but remains only a scholar, might merely record this practice as he or she conducted normal investment banking work. The focus of this 'being there'

approach is about capturing the meaning of a practice for the informants. In contrast to a 'becoming them' approach, the scholar may not feel the urges that becoming an investment banker entails and, therefore, may not feel compelled to engage in behaviors that extract a cost, such as sleep deprivation. The 'becoming them' aspect of observant participation may entail that one feels these urges and willingly submits to costly behaviors. For example, Wacquant (2004) submitted himself even to the risky aspects of boxing, breaking his nose once. In fact, he was so captivated by his boxing experience that he contemplated becoming a professional boxer. However, even if the scholarly role remained in the foreground of one's experience, such that one does not feel the participants' urges, the methodological aspects of observant participation, sensitized by the habitus concept, would dictate that one sampled such attempts at reshaping the body by undergoing the same types of experiments and recorded their evolving impact on the self.

In observant participation, thus, the scholarly role remains in the foreground. This is the second important distinction from an autoethnography, which entails that the person was a cultural member first and only became a scholar after the participation experience had been concluded. As a result, in autoethnography the only types of scholarly methods that can be used are methods of subsequent detachment. One cannot iterate between detached analysis and immersed experimentation on the self, which is the hallmark of observant participation.

Observant participation also differs from non-scientific forms of autoethnography that ground themselves in the humanities (e.g. Ellis et al., 2011). Non-scientific autoethnography questions the ability of science to uncover 'truths'. In this view, a better aim of scholarship is narrative. It involves the construction of stories, as 'complex, constitutive, meaningful phenomena that taught morals and ethics, introduced unique ways of thinking and feeling, and helped people make

sense of themselves and others' (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 273). In contrast, the observant participant scholar is (1) not a central character in (2) a narrative, but one of many informants in an account of research findings. It uses the self to understand what is collective and 'real', being committed to social science, albeit a postpositivistic one; it is designed to examine objective social structures. It may borrow tools from the humanities and art, but does so in the service of science, as another way to provide the phenomenon with face validity, which is a scientific criterion. For example, Wacquant (2004) used the novella form to make it possible for the reader to vicariously experience the 'ache and pain' of boxing, thereby also enrolling the reader's body in the scientific endeavor.

A Primer on Observant Participation in Knowledge-Based Organizations

This chapter thus proposes ethnography in the form of observant participation as a preferred method for understanding the holistic transformation that contemporary knowledge workers undergo as they submit to historically novel, all-encompassing work schedules. I posit that this approach can reorient the management discipline, which has as its central task the goal of understanding the organizational influence on the individual, but has been constrained by a narrow focus on studying component parts of persons, most notably their minds. To conduct ethnography from this broader perspective of reorienting research on the organizational discipline's central task, it is necessary to formulate an agenda to guide our collective effort, including a set of research questions and the broader disciplinary goals to be pursued by answering these questions. The remainder of this chapter proposes such questions and goals and shows how observant participation can be utilized to advance this disciplinary agenda.

The research questions we need to answer collectively include: What aspects of persons change through their participation in knowledge-based organizations? Through what mechanisms do these changes occur? How do these changes evolve over time? How do the person and the context mutually constitute each other? One challenge fieldworkers confront in addressing these questions is that the observational territory that we need to cover is much greater than before, more complex, and largely uncharted. Whereas prior behavioral constructs set our focus on the mental realm of the person, we now also need to cover the prediscursive, embodied realm, for which we do not have any guidance. And whereas prior organizational constructs set our focus on the visible organizational structures that are designed for the purpose of control, such as socialization activities, we now need to cover the invisible aspects of control that are designed for other purposes. Moreover, all of these elements have to be studied together to understand how they keep modulating each other and how they do so in distinct ways over time.

Illustrating such evolving reciprocal modulation, my research (Michel, 2011) shows how investment banking practices and bankers' bodies and minds interrelated in distinct ways over time. A variety of bank practices worked together to create a culture of high quality work conducted at an intense pace. To fit with this culture, bankers' socialized minds repressed their bodies' needs and cues, for example, often working multiple 'all-nighters' in a row. During the first four years, this repression enabled the bankers to reproduce the banks' work pace and quality. But after about four years, the relation between practice, body, and mind changed. The body started to rebel through breakdowns, thwarting the socialized mind's goals, and affecting work quality. For some bankers, after about year six, the relation changed again, as the mind now started to utilize the body's cues to modify bank practices that benefited bank and banker.

Observant participation is a powerful method for addressing the proposed research questions. First, as an apprentice who engages in the organization's activities, the researcher is the nexus at which the diverse causally active aspects of the socio-material context, including 'micro-' and 'macro-' aspects, come together and exert influence. For example, by executing deals, the apprentice banker engages with aspects of the economic context, including clients and competitors; aspects of the firm's strategy, such as how the bank positions its products; behavioral aspects, such as how bankers interrelate; and aspects of the socio-material context, such as working environment layout and technology. The researcher can thus witness the evolving interplay of these elements over time. In contrast, if one were to approach the same challenge with a deductive approach, one would have to guess what specific aspects of the context have an impact, which is difficult because we have little conceptual guidance for doing so. Moreover, because deductive research is often conducted from a specialized perspective (e.g. either micro or macro), the likelihood is high that one would miss elements and mis-specify them because how a given aspect manifests depends on how other aspects manifest. For example, the body is a qualitatively different kind of activity aspect (e.g. a repressed object, rebellious antagonist, or helpful resource), depending on how the mind relates to it and depending on the specific set of practices it is engaged in.

Second, observant participation also has an advantage over traditional ethnography because of how it utilizes the researcher's own experience. Because the researcher has more continuous and more invasive access to the self as an object, as compared to other informants, the researcher can explore more facets of change, especially vaguely felt embodied changes. For example, in my ethnographic study (Michel, 2011), participant observation could have helped me fill in the categories of 'mind' and 'body', as they were manifesting in this particular setting, adding subcategories and

more finely grained interrelations. Moreover, since changes in persons come from how persons engage with aspects of the socio-material context, the researcher can continuously formulate hypotheses about this reciprocal transformation and test these hypotheses in action, by using different tools and using tools differently to discern the evolving influence on the self. This ongoing and rapid iteration between action, hypothesis formulation, and hypothesis testing promises to yield fast results, as compared to what would be possible through conducting separate studies.

The kinds of methods that the observant participant researcher uses are comparable to the methods that other types of ethnographers use, with the added dimension that the researcher also directs these methods toward the self, turning the self into a research object, as captured by Bourdieu's (2003) notion of 'participant objectivation'. In addition to keeping field notes, promising methods for this purpose include filming the self (and others) at work, interviewing oneself (and others) in front of a camera regularly, and interviewing preexisting relations, such as family members, about their evolving experience with the self. Video work is especially useful because it allows one to track embodied changes that might only be meaningful over time and changes that develop too gradually for the self and others to notice, such as sitting-induced posture changes. It also generates material that other analysts can access, allowing for assessing inter-observer reliability. Whatever data collection method one uses, it is important to remember that the self is not a privileged epistemic object; what occurs in the self is merely of interest to the extent that it unlocks what is collective. Therefore, the researcher has to (1) collect data on both self and others, and (2) continuously iterate analytically between data on self and others, with the goal of identifying those aspects that are socially shared.

While we do not have much guidance on where to focus analytic attention, one promising starting point is to examine the evolution

of habits as the basis of how the context controls and transforms the person in ways that are invisible to the person, as illustrated in the following quotation by Erin Callan, the former CFO of Lehman Brothers, in her candid New York Times OpEd about her experience with high-intensity investment banking work practices:

I didn't start out with the goal of devoting all of myself to my job. It crept in over time. Each year that went by, slight modifications became the new normal. First I spent a half-hour on Sunday organizing my e-mail, to-do list and calendar to make Monday morning easier. Then I was working a few hours on Sunday, then all day. My boundaries slipped away until work was all that was left. (Callan, 2013)

Like Callan, my informants could only articulate consequential habits retrospectively, after they had left the cultural setting, often induced by a severe personal crisis. Like all retrospective recollection, much detail gets lost about how a particular habit evolved. Also, because informants are not trained researchers and usually do not keep detailed notes, they may only have noticed or remembered some habits, perhaps not even the most important ones.

Moreover, many habits are interrelated in ways that may not be apparent to the untrained informant. For example, the increasingly long working hours of my informants led to health problems, such as insomnia, which decreased output and made it necessary for the person to work even harder. This cycle cued other habits, such as consuming drugs that allowed the banker to sleep and drugs that kept the overtired banker awake. These habits gave the person the experience that body cues could simply be overridden, which the person then generalized to other situations, such as ignoring signs of serious illness or consuming other substances to suppress anxiety and depression, forming (1) a meta-habit of repressing the body in the service of organizational goals, that (2) was likely to implode over time, leading to new types of modulations between work, mind, and body

(e.g. Michel, 2014). Together, these examples illustrate that the modifications that constitute a habit are often minor, private, inter-related with other habits, and evolving over time – attributes that make observant participation the best bet for uncovering them.

As evidenced by the prior example, longitudinal research is an integral component of the observant participant approach, required to uncover the evolving effects of organizations on participants. For example, Wacquant (2011) instructs the researcher to stay as long and as deep in the field as possible. Part of what we need to discover is how long the researcher needs to stay in the field to capture important changes. Prematurely exiting the field can lead to consequential incorrect conclusions. For example, because socialization research conceptualizes change in persons as merely cognitive, such as a change in concepts, and because organizational participants learn important organizational concepts within six months, most socialization research only studies participants' first year at an organization (e.g. Bauer et al., 1998). However, because I stayed in the field longer, I had the opportunity to observe that changes continue to occur, for example, in years four and six and beyond (e.g. Michel, 2011, 2014). These changes did not reflect the tempo at which the mind was socialized, but the evolving effect of socialization on the body, which changes at a different tempo, as compared to the mind. The more holistic conceptualization of the person that I advocate is partly a matter of discovering how different aspects of the person change at different and potentially interacting timescales, all of which are specific to a particular cultural and historical context. The very long research timeframes that are required for answering this question mean that observant participation needs to be complemented with other methods. For example, once observant participation yields propositions about what aspects of persons change through what specific aspects of work, we could conduct more targeted, cross-sectional survey studies that track how these

aspects (1) differ across different types of knowledge work, and (2) change over long periods of time.

What Type of Research Can Benefit From Observant Participation?

Participant observation is a powerful tool for studying aspects of action that are invisible to quantitative and other qualitative approaches, including embodied and taken-for-granted aspects. This attribute benefits approaches such as organizational practice theory, situated perspectives on organization change, and institutional research.

Observant participation can assist organizational practice scholars with elaborating the human aspects of practice. Congenial to the approach I outline here, organizational practice scholarship conceptualizes persons and the social context as mutually constituted (e.g. Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011) and critiques cognitivist approaches for folding action and cognition into the mind of the person (see Nicolini et al., 2003 for a review). Through empirical research, practice scholars have provided an understanding of how cognition is instead an attribute of a system to which both participants and the socio-material context contribute elements. To balance the undue person focus of cognitivism, practice researchers have prioritized elaborating the socio-material aspects of cognition. While practice scholars have articulated how the person should *not* be conceptualized, namely as cognitive and decontextualized, they have not yet provided a compelling replacement for cognitivism's conceptualization of the person-as-mind.

Given the lack of conceptual guidance, formulating an alternative conceptualization requires qualitative, discovery-oriented research. However, this research cannot rely on such traditional methods as participants' self-report because our colloquial understanding of personhood, cognition, and action is infused

with a cognitive perspective; informants and researchers alike use cognitivism as a lay theory. Armed with sensitizing concepts, observant participation can help break through taken-for-grantedness, partly because the scholar can conduct experiments on the self, such as varying the tools that one engages with and observing the concomitant changes in the person.

For example, after about year ten of my data collection, some of my informants experienced their second and often incapacitating breakdown from overwork. A few took up sports, initially to heal. Over time, they transferred the embodied dispositions they had learned in banking, such as marshaling resources for high performance, to this new context, where they marshaled specialized training techniques, technological devices, and equipment to supplement and coax high performance out of their aging bodies. To understand my informants' experience, I experimented with similar training regimens, observing the resulting, diverse changes in my person, including systematically changed blood tests, new emotional responses, different ways in which others approached me, new ways of responding to others, different types of illnesses and injuries, and different ways of thinking and writing (e.g. characteristic length of sentences, types of sentence structures). This experiment showed how a different set of tools can bring out wide-ranging changes in the person, inviting a composite conceptualization of the person-with-tools to substitute for the impoverished and decontextualized cognitive one.

Observant participation can also advance our understanding of organization change as continuous and situated. Such notions as improvisation (Weick, 1998), performativity (Callon, 1998), structuration (Orlikowski, 1996), and organizational becoming (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002) have revealed how flux occurs naturally, as a result of participants' daily business activity, and predisposes organizations to continuous change, whereas fixity is an active accomplishment, thus reversing the previously predominant assumption that stability is natural. This approach redirects the attention

of organizational change research from top management's abstract cognitions toward situated action (e.g. Jarzabkowski, 2004; Vaara & Whittington, 2012) to which both persons and the social context contribute structure. Yet we currently have an incomplete understanding of what these situated structures are and how they keep forming each other. For example, Eisenhardt and colleagues (Eisenhardt, 1989; Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997) found that continuously changing organizations have (1) employees who attend to concrete information and (2) semi-structures that facilitate improvisation, but do not explain (a) what other dimensions of the person change and (b) how personal and structural attributes interrelate and keep forming each other. Placing the scholar at the nexus of embodied and socio-material structures, observant participation can supply this foundational understanding.

Observant participation is also an ideal methodology to study taken-for-grantedness, a central construct for institutional research (for reviews, see Scott, 2008a; Tolbert & Zucker, 1996). Scott (2008b) deplored that empirical institutional research has focused on the 'more superficial, "thinner", and less consequential' aspects of culture, 'including rule-setting, monitoring, and sanctioning' (pp. 428–9) and choices elicited by legitimacy or obligation. He noted that this misinformed focus resulted from methodological preferences. Namely, institutional scholars tend to study concepts and how they become taken-for-granted, for example, through social circulation. Because institutional research investigates at the aggregate and macro-level (Scott, 2008b), it does not explain how taken-for-granted cognitions are instantiated in practice; how they shape what people do on a daily basis that requires behavioral research. As an unusually powerful type of behavioral research, observant participation allows institutional scholars to also investigate the deeper cultural levels on which Scott (2008b) invited research, which compel people to act not out of agency, legitimacy, or obligation, but because they cannot conceive otherwise.

These actions are particularly consequential: They maintain the system that generated them since actors who do not recognize their choices as such are less likely to alter the system in their own interests. Because participants cannot self-report on what they take for granted, the participant observer, equipped with sensitizing concepts and methods, has a higher likelihood of uncovering these deeper dimensions of culture, and discovering how they become embodied in persons.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the cultural-anthropological embodiment lens I outline here makes it possible to capitalize on a pivotal cultural moment, in which new forms of human functioning are emerging, driven by the work cultures of a new form of organizing, namely knowledge work. This means that hand-in-hand with the need to understand new forms of organizational functioning and control, we need to understand these new forms of human functioning and how the one is tied to the other, helping organizations to structure their work practices in ways that transform participants for the benefit of all.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am grateful to Ann Cunliffe for providing invaluable suggestions. Thanks to Dana Kaminstein for helpful conversations and resources.

REFERENCES

- Adler, P. A., P. Adler, and E. B. Rochford. 1986. Of rhetoric and presentation. The four faces of ethnography. *Sociological Quarterly*, 49(1): 1–30.
- Albert, S., Ashforth, B. E., and Dutton, J. E. 2000. Organizational identity and identification: Charting new waters and building new bridges. *Academy of Management Review*, 25(1): 13–17.
- Alvesson, M. 2004. *Knowledge Work and Knowledge-Intensive Firms*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Anteby, M. 2013. Relaxing the taboo on telling our own stories: Upholding professional distance and personal involvement. *Organizational Science*, 24(4): 1277–90.
- Bauer, T. N., E. W. Morrison, and R. R. Callister. 1998. Organizational socialization: A review and directions for future research. *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management* 16: 149–214.
- Bittner, E. (1973). Objectivity and realism in sociology. In G. Psathas (ed.), *Phenomenological Sociology*. New York: Wiley, 109–25.
- Bourdieu, P. 1977. *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. 2003. Participant objectivation. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 9(2): 281–94.
- Brown, S. L., & K. M. Eisenhardt. 1997. The art of continuous change: Linking complexity theory and time-paced evolution in relentlessly shifting organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 42(1): 1–34.
- Callan, E. 2013. Is there life after work? *New York Times*, March 9, Sunday Review Section.
- Callon, M. 1998. *The Laws of Markets*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Chao, G. T., A. M. O'Leary-Kelly, S. Wolf, H. J. Klein, and P. D. Gardner. 1994. Organizational socialization: Its content and consequences. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79(5): 730–43.
- Coser, L. 1967. Greedy organizations. *European Journal of Sociology*, 8(2): 196–215.
- Csordas, T. J. 1990. Embodiment as a paradigm for anthropology. *Ethos*, 18(1): 5–47.
- Davenport, T. H. (2005). *Thinking for a Living*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Eisenhardt, K. M. 1989. Making fast strategic decisions in high-velocity environments. *Academy of Management Journal*, 32(3): 543–76.
- Ellis, C., T. E. Adams, & A. P. Bochner. 2011. Autoethnography: An overview. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, 12(1): 273–390.
- Erickson, F. (2002). Culture and human development. *Human Development*, 45(4): 299–306.

- Feldman, M. S., & W. J. Orlikowski. 2011. Theorizing practice and practicing theory. *Organization Science*, 22(5): 1240–53.
- Fiske, S. T., & S. E. Taylor. 1991. *Social Cognition*, 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Geertz, C. (1972). Deep play: Notes on the Balinese cockfight. *Daedalus*, 101(1): 1–37.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic Books.
- Geertz, C. (1976). From the native's point of view: On the nature of anthropological understanding. In P. Rabinow and W. M. Sullivan (eds.), *Interpretive Social Science: A Reader*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 225–41.
- Goffman, E. 1961. *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. Garden City: Doubleday.
- Higgins, E. T., & A. W. Kruglanski (eds.). 1996. *Social Psychology: Handbook of Basic Principles*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Jarzabkowski, P. 2004. Strategy as practice: Recursiveness, adaptation and practices-in-use. *Organization Studies*, 25(4): 529–60.
- Jorgensen, D. L. 1989. *Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies* (Vol. 15). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Kantor, J., & D. Streitfeldaug. 2015. Inside Amazon: Wrestling big ideas in a bruising workplace. *The New York Times*, August 15. Business Day Section, p. 1.
- Kellogg, K. C. 2011. Hot lights and cold steel: Cultural and political toolkits for practice change in surgery. *Organization Science*, 22: 482–502.
- Kunda, G. 1992. *Engineering Culture: Control and Commitment in a High-tech Corporation*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Lave, J., & E. Wenger. 1991. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- Locke, K. (2011). Field research practice in management and organization studies: Reclaiming its tradition of discovery. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 5(1): 613–52.
- Luker, K. 2008. *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences: Research in the Age of Info-glut*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Malinowski, B. 1922. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. New York: Dutton.
- Malinowski, B. 1967. *A Diary in the Strictest Sense of the Term*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Manyika, J., S. Lund, B. Auguste, & S. Ramaswamy. 2012. Help wanted: The future of work in advanced economies. *The McKinsey Global Institute*. Accessed electronically, October 2015. www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/employment-and-growth/future-of-work-in-advanced-economies
- March, J. G. & H. A. Simon. 1958. *Organizations*. New York: Wiley.
- Marcus, G. E. (1994). After the critique of ethnography: Faith, hope, and charity, but the greatest of these is charity. In R. Borofsky (ed.), *Assessing Cultural Anthropology*. New York: McGraw-Hill Humanities. Social Sciences and World Languages, 40–53.
- Mazmanian, M. A., W. J. Orlikowski, and J. Yates. 2005. CrackBerrys: The social implications of ubiquitous wireless e-mail devices. In C. Sorensen, Y. Yoo, K. Lytinen, & J. I. DeGross (eds.), *Designing Ubiquitous Information Environments: Socio-Technical Issues and Challenges*. New York: Springer, 337–43.
- Michel, A. A. 2011. Transcending socialization: A nine-year ethnography of the body's role in organizational control and knowledge worker transformation. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 54(3): 1–44.
- Michel, A. A. 2014. Participation and self-entrapment: A 12-year ethnography of Wall Street participation practices' diffusion and evolving consequences. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 55(3): 514–36.
- Molden, D. C. & C. S. Dweck. 2006. Finding 'meaning' in psychology: A lay theories approach to self-regulation, social perception, and social development. *American Psychologist*, 61(3): 192–203.
- Nicolini, D., S. Gherardi, & D. Yanow. 2003. Introduction: Towards a practice-based view of knowing and learning in organizations. In D. Nicolini, S. Gherardi, & D. Yanow (eds.), *Knowing in Organizations: A Practice-based Approach*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 3–31.
- O'Reilly, C. A. and J. A. Chatman. 1996. Culture as social control: Corporations, cults, and commitment. In B. M. Staw (ed.), *Research in Organizational Behavior*. Greenwich: JAI Press, 18: 157–200.
- Orlikowski, W. J. 1996. Improvising organizational transformation over time: A situated change perspective. *Information Systems Research*, 7(1): 63–92.

- Padavic, I., R. J. Ely, & E. Reid (2013). The work-family narrative as a social defense. *Gender and Work: Challenging Conventional Wisdom*. Harvard Business School. Accessed at www.hbs.edu/faculty/conferences/2013-w50-research-symposium/Documents/Gender_and_work_web_update2015.pdf.
- Pfeffer, J. 1997. *New Directions for Organization Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Scott, W. R. 2008a. *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas and Interests*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Scott, W. R. 2008b. Approaching adulthood: The maturing of institutional theory. *Theory and Society*, 37(5): 427–42.
- Simon, H. A. 1976. *Administrative Behavior*, 3rd ed. New York: Free Press.
- Taylor, C. 1993. To follow a rule ... In C. Calhoun, E. LiPuma, & M. Postone (eds.), *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 45–60.
- Tolbert, P. S., & L. G. Zucker. 1996. The institutionalization of institutional theory. In S. R. Clegg, C. Hardy, & W. R. Nord (eds.), *Handbook of Organization Studies*. London: Sage, 175–90.
- Tsoukas, H., & R. Chia. 2002. On organizational becoming: Rethinking organizational change. *Organization Science*, 13(5): 567–82.
- Vaara, E., & R. Whittington. 2012. Strategy as practice: Taking social practices seriously. *Academy of Management Annals*, 6(1): 285–336.
- Van Maanen, J. 2011. *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*, 2nd ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Van Maanen, J., & S. R. Barley. 1984. Occupational communities: Culture and control in organizations. In B. Staw & L. Cummings (eds.), *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 6 Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 287–365.
- Van Maanen, J., & D. Kolb. 1985. The professional apprentice: Observations on fieldwork roles in two organizational settings. In S. B. Bacharach & S. M. Mitchell (eds.), *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1–33.
- Vidich, A. J., & S. M. Lyman. 2000. Qualitative methods: Their history in sociology and anthropology. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 37–84.
- Wacquant, L. 2004. *Body and Soul: Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wacquant, L. 2011. Habitus as topic and tool: Reflections on becoming a prizefighter. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 8(1): 81–92.
- Weber, M. 2004. *The Vocation Lectures*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing.
- Weick, K. E. 1998. Improvisation as a mindset for organizational analysis. *Organization Science*, 9(5): 543–55.
- Winch, P. 1956. Social science. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 7(1): 18–33.
- Worthman, C. M. 1995. Bio-cultural basis of human variation. *International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development Newsletter*, 27: 10–13.

Organizational Ethnographies

Sylwia Ciuk, Juliette Koning
and Monika Kostera

INTRODUCTION

While there is no commonly agreed definition of organizational ethnography, it can be succinctly described as a particular type of ethnographic study, including its written representation, which is concerned with organizations and their processes of organizing (Ybema et al., 2009). It is important to note that organizations are understood here in a broad sense and do not necessarily need to be confined to formal ones (Watson, 2012). At times, organizational ethnography is differentiated from workplace ethnographies, which are seen as being primarily concerned with the study of work (Down, 2012), workers and their 'relations of conflict and cooperation with managers' (Edwards & Bélanger, 2008, p. 292). Organizational ethnographies, on the other hand, are preoccupied with broader aspects of organizing (Ybema et al., 2009). While some authors put forward criteria which differentiate workplace and organizational ethnographies (e.g. Hodson, 2004;

Yanow & Geuijen, 2009), for the purposes of this chapter, we avoid such strict differentiations and focus on organizational ethnography, although, as the readers will notice, many of the observations we make and the sources we quote refer both to organizational and workplace ethnographies.

ORGANIZATIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY: WHAT, WHY AND HOW

Organizational ethnography, and ethnography more generally, can be seen as a particular type of a 'social practice which is concerned with the study and representation of culture' (Van Maanen, 2011, p. 219). Similarly, it is often presented as a distinctive type of research (Watson, 2012) and a methodology (Neyland, 2008) rather than a method. It entails not only fieldwork, but also headwork and textwork (Van Maanen, 2011). With regards to fieldwork, ethnography is predicated upon

observation, albeit with different and often shifting degrees of participation and changing roles of the ethnographer (see e.g. Börjesson, 2013). As Van Maanen (2011, p. 219) observed, it entails ‘subjecting oneself to at least a part of the life situation of others’. This immersion and close observation of the life of others in particular settings requires careful attention to the everyday interactions, situations and occurrences. Ethnography aims to achieve intimate knowledge of situated actors and objects (Marcus, 1995). As Neyland (2008) warns, ethnographic preoccupation with culture can sometimes mistakenly be understood as being confined to people, not objects or technology, although ethnographic research also concerns the latter (Jarzabkowski et al., 2015). The everydayness of organizational ethnography means that ‘fine grained daily interactions constitute the lifeblood of the data produced’ (Falzon, 2009, p. 1) which the ethnographer tries to capture and convey, relying on a powerful extracted example (Fine et al., 2009). Ethnography seeks to grasp and provide a truthful account of people’s experiences. As a consequence, ethnography ‘has the potential to inform the projects and practices ... of anyone entering the type of setting covered by the study’ (Watson, 2011, p. 209). It is interested in how selected groups and communities go about their lives by exploring events and staying attuned to language, rituals and artefacts (Cunliffe, 2010) in a given context. Attention to context is key in organizational ethnography as practices are seen to be inherently ‘contextual and difficult to fully understand without taking into account interactions and actions emerging in the flux of organizational activities’ (Rouleau et al., 2014, p. 4).

Organizational ethnography strives to understand social practices and processes rather than reified states, and so it takes into consideration everything that occurs, no matter how rare or common it turns out to be. As Fine et al. (2009, p. 611) observe, this attention to process ‘enables the identification of mechanisms through which organizational behaviour occurs’. As

is the case with interpretive research more generally (see e.g. Gephart, Chapter 3, this *Handbook*), ethnography seeks to ‘reveal the intricate, evolving connections between taken-for-granted understandings and human activities’ (Schwartz-Shea, 2006, p. 92). It stays attuned to what may seem as banal and mundane features of organizational realities (Neyland, 2008). In particular, the cultural understandings held by others, ‘meanings about work, about careers, about life’ are core to the ethnographic practice (Van Maanen, 2015, p. 40).

While the need for some immersive strategies in ethnography appears to be a commonly shared assumption, what this means in practice remains a topic of some debate. Echoing wider concerns within the fields of anthropology and sociology, the traditional homelands of ethnography (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992), some organizational ethnographies have attracted considerable criticism for their speediness and superficiality (Bate, 1997; Wright, 1994). Indeed, the time-span of much research in organizations is usually much shorter than that of social and cultural anthropology. The involvement is also usually less intense, because the methods used tend to be less immersive (direct observation and interviews dominate over full participant observation). While we certainly do not promote superficiality in ethnographic work, it is important to recognize that organizational settings typically *are* less immersive cultures themselves; people come and go to work, only exceptionally do they dedicate all of their lives to it. It is important to acknowledge that organizations are fragmented and fragmentary cultures. Although they do define much of our identities and ways of life, they do not monopolize or occupy our social imagination the way that the larger cultural context might do (Kostera, 2012).

Intensive fieldwork in a natural setting, while crucial in ethnography, is not enough to turn the written work into an ethnographic study (Brannan et al., 2012). What is required is a special type of ‘headwork’ (Van Maanen, 2011), one that draws connections between the observed local phenomena and broader

cultural and societal context. Knowledge gained through organizational ethnography, therefore, concerns ideas and practices directly relevant at the level of the field (and other, similar ones) and is of a holistic nature, that is, it helps to grasp the social world in all its dynamics and complexity, to consider phenomena in their broader context. While ethnographic holism has been described as ‘something of an ethnographic fiction’ (Van Maanen, 2006, p. 16), ethnography strives to combine ‘subjective experience and individual agency with a sensitivity to the broader social settings and the historical and institutional dynamics in which these are embedded’ (Yanow et al., 2012, p. 335). In order to achieve this, ethnography is often described as being predicated upon the researcher’s ‘ethnographic sensibility’ (Yanow & Geuijen, 2009, p. 254), ‘ethnographic awareness’ (Watson, 2012, p. 18) or the ‘anthropological state of mind’ (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992, p. 72), the definitions of which often appear to be quite elusive. According to Pader (2006), ethnographic sensibility refers to the way in which we engage with our research setting, remaining attuned to detail and trying at the same time to discern the meaning of the observed events, objects and practices within the local and the wider context. It is about trying to ‘move about with a questioning attitude and a meaning-focused eye in all manner of settings and circumstances’ (Ybema et al., 2009, p. 15), combining openness to new realities and meanings with a constant need to problematize and a reluctance to take anything for granted since to:

make explicit the meaning, the significance, of everyday practices in any kind of truly explanatory manner requires going beneath the surface to those messy spaces of our lives where we commonly don’t explain why we do what we do ... The careful observation and self- and cultural discovery of research, however, turn this acceptance into explicitly stated, empirical data. (Pader, 2006, p. 174)

One can argue that the need for ethnographic sensibility becomes even more pronounced in the case of organizational ethnographies

where researchers study fields that are, in fact, very similar to their own ones (Czarniawska, 2014). Organizational ethnographers may not encounter many strange adventures; rather, they often find themselves stuck with the familiar and the mundane. It is this everyday world, a standard workplace, that the ethnographer needs to approach with curiosity, respect and inquisitiveness. This is what Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar (1979, p. 29) mean by anthropological research of the everyday world, as they argue ‘the importance of bracketing our familiarity with the object of our study’.

The questioning attitude or ‘reflexive distance’ (Ybema & Kamsteeg, 2009, p. 115, see also Hayward and Cassell, Chapter 22, this *Handbook*) is seen to enable ethnographers to ‘make the familiar strange’ (ibid., p. 101). Indeed, it is the ‘encounter with the “foreign”, or “unknown”, or “strange” [that] is the very essence of ethnography’ (Van Maanen, 2015, p. 40). This careful attention to how organization members go about and make sense of their daily lives enables organizational ethnographers to shed light onto hidden dimensions of organizational life, such as the issues related to emotions, power and politics (Ybema et al., 2009). Since the purpose of ethnography is ‘to provide a localized understanding of the cultural processes – meaning-making – as it occurs from a few vantage points within the organization’ (Van Maanen, 2011, p. 221), ethnography is not only about immersion, but it also entails translation (Cunliffe, 2010). According to Agar (2010, p. 290), ethnography is ‘fundamentally about *translation*, about the exploration, learning, and documentation of one perspective together with a mapping between it and another’.

The ethnographer not only has to be directly involved in the studied setting but they also need to be prepared for a cognitively intensive engagement (see e.g. Rosen, 2000). It is true of organizational as it is of all other ethnography that it is a borderland experience: ‘[it] is actively situated between powerful systems of meaning. It poses its questions at the boundaries of civilizations, cultures, classes, races, and genders. Ethnography

decodes and recodes, telling the grounds of collective order and diversity, inclusion and exclusion' (Clifford, 1986, pp. 2–3).

Ethnography can therefore be described as an approach that enables the researcher to go beyond the dualism of experiential and collective perspectives. Ethnography 'is neither subjective nor objective; it is interpretive, mediating two worlds through a third' (Agar, 1986, p. 19). The headwork of ethnography is intimately connected with deskwork. The written outcome of the ethnographer's work is an integral element. In fact, some authors (e.g. Watson, 2011) suggest that ethnography should be seen primarily as a written document rather than the fieldwork that leads to it. Organizational ethnography as a written document is not just concerned with a realistic representation of the social actors in the field, but it also strives to be democratic instead of casting some voices as illegitimate (Yanow, 2012). It is important to note, however, that while organizational ethnography and ethnography more generally 'claims a sort of informative and documentary status' (Van Maanen, 2011, p. 219) and is concerned with a detailed mapping of different voices and perspectives (Yanow, 2012), it also carries a promise for theorizing work and organizations (Rouleau et al., 2014), not least because of the flexibility of its design, which allows for immediate assessment of emerging theoretical propositions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). It is, however, the 'theoretical pluralism' that is favoured in order to answer the 'how' questions (Van Maanen, 2015, p. 48).

ORGANIZATIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

We will not attempt to join the 'crowded domain' of trying to establish the origins of organizational ethnography (Van Maanen, in Luthans et al., 2013, p. 110). We concur with Yanow (2009) that organizational ethnography is far from 'new'. In fact it is fair to say

that today's organizational ethnographies stand on the shoulders of a rich tradition of 'ethnographic' research in a variety of disciplines. Its heritage can be found in anthropology (the 'fieldwork' tradition of participant observation as dedicated to Malinowski; thick description as put forward by Clifford Geertz), sociology (the famous ethnographic tradition of the Chicago School with such well-known scholars of urban sociology as William Foot Whyte), and (industrial) psychology (Elton Mayo and the Hawthorne studies). However, Van Maanen (in Luthans et al., 2013, p. 107), argues that, if we 'need a primogenitor for organizational ethnography, W. Lloyd Warner is the one and Yankee City is the birthplace, not Hawthorne'. Warner, an anthropologist, had been part of the Hawthorne studies but his community ethnographies of Yankee City, which he did after Hawthorne, excel in being 'far broader' and more 'thoughtful' than what came out of the Hawthorne studies and he thus deserves a prominent place among the studies named as important for present-day organizational ethnography (ibid.).

Organizational ethnography as a research approach, to date, has undergone several important changes since these 'beginnings'. A trajectory can be sketched starting with the 'early' studies depicting and revealing 'bureaucratic' organizations with such classics as Selznick's *TVA and the Grassroots* (1949), Gouldner's *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy* (1954), and Goffman's *The Presentation of Self* (1959), followed by a first wave of renewal in the 1980s and 1990s with a stronger ethnographic (socio-cultural) focus, such as Kunda's *Engineering Culture* (1992), Watson's *In Search of Management* (1994), and Delbridge's *Life on the Line* (1998) and specific methodology-focused works in the 2000s by Kostera (2007), Neyland (2008) and Ybema et al. (2009), to name a few. Far more detailed and comprehensive overviews have been compiled by Yanow and Geuijen (2009) for organizational ethnography and by Hodson (2008) for workplace ethnographies.

A second wave of renewal is currently under way. This wave is inspired both by new technologies for the doing of organizational ethnography as well as by how technologies and increased connectivity are reshaping organizational life, leading to a far more open stance towards 'the' organization and its supposed boundaries. The rise of new organizational forms, and by extension the proliferation of cultural processes that take place across and in-between potential ethnographic sites, means that what constitutes the ethnographic field can hardly be considered 'exclusively local or whole' (Van Maanen, 2011, p. 225). Similarly, ethnographic objects of study are often mobile and therefore cannot be studied within a single location (Marcus, 1995). These changes, coupled with technological developments and evolving approaches to the purpose and role of ethnography, have resulted in a rise of new forms of organizational ethnography. While it is impossible to consider them all within the scope of this chapter, we would like to discuss a few examples which illustrate these emergent trends, namely multisited ethnography, para-ethnography, applied and reflexive/engaged ethnography. Autoethnography (e.g. Doloriert & Sambrook, 2012; Haynes, 2019; Humphreys, 2005; Learmonth & Humphreys, 2012; Sambrook, 2015) and netnography/virtual ethnography (e.g. Bowler, 2010; Kozinets, 2002, 2015, 2019; Murthy, 2013; Wittel, 2000), which we also see as important developments, have been addressed in detail elsewhere.

According to Yanow et al. (2012), when it comes to organizational ethnography, multisitedness should be considered a norm rather than an exception and as such might be regarded as one of its distinctive features. For Yanow and colleagues (2012, p. 342) multisitedness can manifest itself even 'within the walls of a single organization, [since when] "mapping" across its departments and hierarchical levels, one is perforce engaged in a multi-sited study'. Typically, *multisited ethnography*, however, is associated with organizations that are themselves multisited. When researching such fields, 'the "ethno" of ethnography takes

on a quite unreliable, non-localized character' (Fayard & Van Maanen, 2015, p. 17), which leads Van Maanen (2015, p. 46) to argue that this 'shifting field' might be a fertile area for future organizational ethnographic research.

According to Marcus (1995), multisited ethnography is concerned with following objects, stories, processes and metaphors across different geographical locations rather than seeking out new sites as a means for comparison. Multisited ethnography focuses on 'cultural work across boundaries' (Islam, 2015, p. 237) as ethnographic objects, be it people, discourses or goods 'are in a constant state of displacement' (Falzon, 2009, p. 5). As Marcus (1995, p. 105) explains, it is 'designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence' and seeks to explore connections among sites.

At times, the ethnographic object that is being followed is a distinctively global practice, or one that cuts across the global and local levels of analysis. Therefore, this type of multisited ethnography is sometimes called global ethnography (e.g. Burawoy, 2001; Jarzabkowski et al., 2015). Similarly, Czarniawska (2007) discusses mobile ethnography, which sets out to follow actors and practices instead of focusing on a specific location. The multilocality of multisited ethnographies is not linked to the mere existence of multiple sites, but rather, the connections and relationships between them (Hannerz, 2003). The principle of following the ethnographic object, which is so central to multisited ethnography, means that this type of fieldwork often takes even more unexpected directions than more traditional ethnographies which, as we discussed earlier, are themselves necessarily improvisational in character. For example, Prasad et al. (2011), who set out to carry out a multisited ethnography to explore the ways in which the discourse of diversity management played out in different organizational settings, had to expand their original study to include the suppliers of

diversity management tools so as to be able to follow the discourse in question. Similarly, Jarzabkowski et al. (2015) explain how they had to extend their fieldwork to include new sites as their object of study – a global risk trading practice – and the researchers' understanding of it evolved.

This displacement and movement inherent to multisited ethnographic research necessitates a search for innovative methods and techniques of doing fieldwork (Rouleau et al., 2014). Smets et al. (2014), for example, discuss in this context a team-based video ethnography which, as they explain, not only enables shared and simultaneous immersion in multiple sites but also facilitates collective sensemaking and can subsequently contribute to 'interpretive density' of ethnographic work (Jarzabkowski et al., 2015, p. 18).

A second important development in the practice of organizational ethnography is related to the changing nature of collaboration when doing fieldwork and attempts to decentre the researcher. As Yanow et al. (2012, p. 345) observe, discussions about 'going native' and clear distinctions between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' might no longer be appropriate as they objectify participants instead of fostering a relational nature of ethnographic fieldwork. Lassiter and Campell (2010, p. 4) elaborate on this point further, explaining that 'ethnographers no longer enter into projects with clearly defined "subjects" or "informants" but with "epistemic partners"' who might themselves be pursuing their own research questions.

The nature of collaboration between the researcher(s) and organization members will of course differ between ethnographic projects; however, in *para-ethnography* it takes centre stage as organization members are seen here not as sources of raw data but rather as co-producers of cultural analysis (Islam, 2015). In this type of ethnographic work, which is at times described as 'participatory "storytelling"' (ibid., p. 5), 'the questions, products, and functions of ethnography are multi-directional' (Lassiter & Campell, 2010, p. 4). In para-ethnography, researchers can use

'thin' data – 'highly refined, technical documents ... to create contexts and preconditions for "thick" description' (Holmes & Marcus, 2006, p. 36). While para-ethnography relies on participants' ability to reflect upon, challenge and revise their cultural assumptions in ways reminiscent of the theorizing traditionally associated with researchers, it does not need to be confined to knowledge workers and knowledge intensive environments. What matters is 'collaborative critical reflexivity' (Islam, 2015, p. 236).

Para-ethnography has also been linked to wider practice-based approaches and as such it resonates with hopes for more engaged and applied ethnographic studies (Ghorashi & Wels, 2009; Lassiter & Campell, 2010). Notwithstanding some often well-founded concerns about combining ethnographic roles with more clinical approaches (e.g. Yanow, 2012), more *applied organizational ethnographies* appear to be on the rise (Fayard & Van Maanen, 2015). As is sometimes argued, ethnography does not have to stop at recording or describing organizational realities, but it can also help social actors both in and outside of the ethnographic field (Goodall, 2000).

Ethnography enables problematization and description of, sometimes elusive, phenomena and problems and thus it can help to establish the conditions for change and learning in intervention projects such as Action Research (Scaratti et al., Chapter 18, this *Handbook*; Chrostowski & Kostera, 2011). Ethnographic description is close to experience, which helps the researcher to understand the reality being studied, and to establish the preconditions for change (compare Czarniawska, 2014). Such a practical application of ethnography is possible because it provides what Polanyi (1958/1974) called tacit knowledge or knowledge in action that is not verbalized but experienced. More applied organizational ethnographies can foster learning of new ways of organizing and social action since ethnographers do not only propagate the old ways but show that (and how) things can be done differently, inspiring and encouraging social change (Graeber, 2004). It has

therefore been suggested that organizational ethnographies can play a role in organizational development and interventions into organizations (e.g. Agar, 2010; Fine et al., 2009). As Fayard and Van Maanen (2015, p. 6) observe when discussing corporate ethnography, which is a particular type of applied ethnography initiated and sponsored by the studied organization, corporate ethnographies can ‘not only produce new knowledge and understanding for insiders, they also have a hand in producing the organizational realities they study’. As the quoted authors admit, they sought to encourage ‘cultural dialogue’ (p. 18) and to question, if not to alter with time, the dominant normative cultural discourse in the organization and to simultaneously promote a more relational view of culture. It was hoped that the new cultural dialogue initiated among a wider range of organization members would have the potential to influence, at least to some extent, the agenda of senior managers by allowing new voices and new perspectives to be heard.

Organizational ethnography can help organization members to acquire what C. Wright Mills (1959) called sociological imagination, or the ability to combine the experiences of an individual person with one’s consciousness of one’s place in society and history. People tend to grasp their lives in a fragmentary way, limited to their everyday world that consists of their family, workplace and local community. Social imagination helps to overcome this limitation and enables individuals to see the relation between the particular and the social. This connection makes it possible to acquire a distance that is necessary to envisage and learn new practices and ideas, which, in turn, can not only lead to small and structural changes but also at times can trigger even revolutionary ones (Goodall, 2000). In this sense, organizational ethnography can help to achieve courage of thought and action in the workplace, a readiness to test new things and to accept failure as a part of the collective learning process.

Finally, another important, albeit less common, approach is *reflexive ethnography*

(Cunliffe, 2003), also known as *engaged ethnography* (e.g. Behar, 1996; Clair, 2012; Ghorashi & Wels, 2009) or *new ethnography* (Goodall, 2000). Reflexive approaches in social sciences have emerged as an attempt to answer three key areas of problems with traditional perspectives: the crisis of representation, the emphasis on the constitutive role of language and the problems caused by objectification of ethnographic research material (Cunliffe, 2003). While reflexivity, particularly related to a researcher’s location-based positionality, has become an important aspect inherent in ethnographic studies, underpinned by a constructivist–interpretivist methodology (Yanow et al., 2012), reflexive ethnography can also be considered as a particular type of ethnography.

Reflexive ethnography rests on the assumption that the social creation of realities is based on embodied and situated dialogue (Cunliffe, 2002). Social poetics is a research approach that makes it possible to explore how this process is unravelling, including its emerging structure and dynamics. The focus in such a research process is on language as ontology, seen as indeterminate and self-contradictory, with the potential to question and subvert social order – an ability characteristic of poetic language. Such an approach makes it possible to accept research as an ‘ongoing, multivoiced and multimeaning process’ (ibid., p. 131), without any one specific interpretation or mainstream viewpoint dominating the theorizing.

Reflexive ethnography is seen to help avoid the fallacy of objectivizing, petrification and determinization of qualitative research results, because of the constant attentiveness to different voices emerging in the dialogical process. No one voice is regarded as final, yet the perspective is strongly experiential, located within the consciousness of the ethnographer. The methodology includes personal and experiential stories, dialogues, and imaginative and poetic narratives. It blurs and transcends the boundary between genres and disciplines, often resulting in textual

and methodological hybrids. The personal, organizational and societal become counterpoised and the multiple dimensions – social, cultural, political, economic – are revealed and placed against each other.

Other new genres include comparative ethnography, which can be about comparing work or organizational issues in different countries or across different contexts (Van Maanen, 2015). In addition, newer ethnographic approaches for the ‘doing’ include spatial shadowing, multi-event ethnography, arts-based and dialogic ethnography, visual ethnography and the above-mentioned team-based ethnography (see Rouleau et al., 2014).

Notwithstanding these and other new developments, there are also aspects that have not changed (that much), such as the fact that organizational ethnographers prefer theoretical pluralism, write in an engaging and personalized style, have a strong focus on ‘the’ empirical, and do not work according to a standard ‘technique’ (Van Maanen, 2015, p. 48). It is still about discovery (Locke, 2011) and, as nicely put by Van Maanen (2015, p. 47), ‘we have left our cultural islands far behind and many of us are deeply enmeshed in messy and changing work worlds trying to bring back the news of what is happening in them’.

DESIGNING ORGANIZATIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY: QUESTIONS, BEING THERE AND REFLEXIVITY

Organizational ethnography, and ethnography more generally, are characterized by being more ‘improvisational’ (e.g. Van Maanen, 2015, p. 41), rather than highly procedural and rigid. This need for improvisation has been linked to both the indefiniteness of the ethnographic methods (Yanow, 2009) and the research designs that, as Van Maanen (2006, p. 18) commented, ‘have yet to leave their mark’. While there appears to be general agreement that ethnographic strategy needs to be flexible so that ethnographers can

react ‘in the moment’ (Yanow, 2009, p. 192), ethnographers are also advised to develop what Neyland (2008, p. 12) refers to as ‘an approximate strategy’, which is designed to guide, but not restrict, the study. Such a strategy does not need to be finished before commencing fieldwork (ibid.). It should be reflected upon but can also be adapted, if needed. Ethnographic strategy will therefore evolve with the research process.

Organizational ethnography is sometimes described as ‘path-dependent’ (e.g. Van Maanen, 2015, p. 41) and is often an abductive research strategy (Peirce, n.d., in Czarniawska, 2014; Yanow, 2012). It seeks to collect empirical, and often unexpected, material. It not only creates a detailed description but also coins concepts, which seek to illuminate the surprising data. These developing understandings are instantly tried out in new observations (Czarniawska, 2014). As Agar (2010, p. 289) observed, abduction ‘is the heart of ethnography’. In organizational ethnography:

abduction does not apply once. ... The key question in this kind of work is not, what is the research plan? The key question is, how do I start? After that, the same question, repeated over and over ... goes like this: What am I going to do *next*. Ethnography at time $n + 1$ is a function of what was just learned at time n . It’s a path-dependent kind of research driven by *iteration*. (Agar, 2010, p. 289)

Importantly, technological developments enable new research designs, such as team-based video ethnography (Smets et al., 2014), which allow researchers to observe organizing as it happens even though it might be dispersed in time and space and arise unexpectedly (Rouleau et al., 2014). Research designs will invariably involve choices with regards to the site(s), instruments(s) and the fieldworker(s) (Smets et al., 2014). As Lassiter and Campell (2010, p. 8) observe, there is a ‘range of possibilities for how we might imagine, think through, and enact ethnography in the present’. Organizational ethnography’s preoccupation with ‘situated detail’ (Van Maanen, 2006, p.18), however,

means that it favours combined fieldwork methods (Ybema et al., 2009). In particular, there are some concerns about interview-based ethnographies. Yanow (2009, p. 194), for example, warns that ‘if we reduce ethnography to interviews, we lose sight of its specific character as a way of knowing’.

In terms of its focus, organizational ethnographies seek to explore a multitude of problems and themes. Since ethnographies are concerned with understanding how organization members go about their daily working lives and how they make sense of their workplaces, they often ask very open exploratory questions about what goes on in a given setting. However, they can also be more narrowly focused on a selected aspect of organizing or aim to provide more clearly defined theoretical insights (Neyland, 2008). Since the rise in new forms of organizational ethnographies, often enabled by technological development, ethnographies can now ask even bolder questions. They can, for example, investigate how cultural practices operate not only within a given local context but also across organizational units and organizations (Smets et al., 2014). Similarly, ethnographies that supplement traditional observation methods with video-mediated ones can attend to a range of material and symbolic cues and explore how these impact organizational practices (ibid.). The *Journal of Organizational Ethnography* is a great source to explore the growing variety of research interests of today’s organizational ethnographers.

Because ethnographic fieldwork is about ‘being there’ (understood in myriad ways) and about ‘participating, overtly and covertly, in people’s daily lives’ (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 3), both real and virtual, it is inherently relational. It is this relationality – the power in relationship-building and breaking, the power in negotiating access (see also Land and Taylor, Chapter 27, this *Handbook*) and rapport as well as the emotional dimensions of such relationships – that has since the ‘crisis of representation’ (Marcus & Fischer, 1986) been debated more intensely. This anti-realism movement, which took momentum in the

1980s, represents the growing recognition that ethnographers do not simply observe and describe, but, in fact, ‘interpret and inscribe’ (Robben, 2007, p. 446). This contestation, in turn, has contributed to a shift towards reflexivity. Regardless of the changing and increasingly varied (Watson, 2011) scenes in and for ethnography (Holmes & Marcus, 2005), the organizational ethnographer is (always) confronted with the challenging question of how to possibly ‘represent’ the unfamiliar and ‘the other’.

Reflexivity (Scaratti et al., Chapter 18, this *Handbook*) might appear to be the answer, but reflexivity has also come under closer scrutiny in the last decade or so. Some argue that it has become an ‘eclectic’ concept losing meaning (Tomkins & Eatough, 2010, p. 162), while others are questioning the degree of self-indulgence in reflexivity and the usage of reflexivity as a ‘means’ of establishing claims for ‘better’ research (Pillow, 2003). There are also voices that argue that reflexivity has become too rational an activity and overly individualistic (Burkitt, 2012).

These critiques, however, have triggered some interesting responses. An important implication of these recent debates is a re-evaluation of the power involved (in the relationship, the account and representation), with the aim to rebalance the power between/among ethnographer(s) and participant(s). It is not just about acknowledging that there are power dimensions involved and that these are often quite unequal (all of which is quite known already, of course), but primarily about moving towards a different stance – a stance where relationality and reflexivity transform into the realization that ‘we are always in relation to others’ (Cunliffe, 2008, p. 128) and informs the theorizing and meaning-making (see Hibbert et al., 2014). In this context it is useful to mention integrative, inclusive and interpretive reflexivity. Tomkins and Eatough (2010, p. 176), for example, propose a forward-moving reflexive integrative practice, which creates new learning, with each reflexive instance, ‘both about our research topic and about the ways in which we are accessing, interpreting and shaping it’. Inclusive reflexivity, on the

other hand, is aimed at a combined inclusiveness of the dimensions of the relationship that ‘we all hesitate to explicitly reveal (e.g. fear, alienation, embarrassment) ... it is inclusive of the research participants and their anxieties and agendas’ (Koning & Ooi, 2013, p. 17). Finally, interpretive reflexivity (Lichterman, 2015) means that ethnographers focus more on how they went about understanding the meaning-making of their participants (instead of trying to connect knowledge claims with social positions of the researchers). It is important to note that new research contexts also play a role here. For example, Reich (2015) points to greater space for negotiation, between researcher and researched, when conducting research among online communities. This type of ethnographic work can ‘provide new resources to potentially empower participants to make decisions about what participation means to them, their communities, and the issues for which they advocate’ (ibid., p. 411).

There are, therefore, specific qualities to an organizational ethnographic research design (flexibility), the open-minded approach (no fixed questions, if at all), to being there in whichever guise (relationality) and to the importance of a reflexive position (sensitivity towards the power involved and its shifting meanings). These are not mere aspects of how to ‘do’ organizational ethnography but far more the part and parcel of an organizational ethnographic mindset for the above identified ‘fieldwork, headwork, and textwork’. There are, however, a few criteria and yardsticks that we think are relevant to keep in mind while embarking on, carrying out and writing up an organizational ethnographic study. These are presented below.

CRITERIA AND YARDSTICKS

The issue of criteria for assessing the quality of qualitative work (see also Reinhard et al., Chapter 30, this *Handbook*) more generally and ethnography as a particular mode of

doing research has attracted a lot of debate in the literature. While some authors dispute the value of universal criteria (e.g. Guba & Lincoln, 2005) and propose separate lists for different research strategies (e.g. Creswell, 2007), others emphasize their pragmatic value, not least as a pedagogical tool (e.g. Tracy, 2010). Although a detailed discussion of these ongoing debates in the literature is understandably beyond the scope of this chapter and has been very skilfully done elsewhere (e.g. Schwartz-Shea, 2006; Yanow, 2006), we would like to point to a number of yardsticks that we see as useful when doing, writing and assessing organizational ethnographies. Many of the points resonate with the wider criteria used for assessing the quality of qualitative work, whereas others are more specific to ethnographies and relate to their key characteristics discussed earlier in the chapter. By highlighting what we see as useful yardsticks in organizational ethnography, we are not proposing that our list is exhaustive or that it is of universal applicability. On the contrary, we are very cognisant of the evolving nature of our field, which in turn prompts debates around the issues of quality, rigour and the changing expectations organizational ethnographers are facing. The plethora of new forms of doing, writing and disseminating organizational ethnographies further complicates the debates of rigour, as new emerging forms of organizational ethnography have their own distinctive characteristics. It is therefore reasonable to expect that these evolving forms of organizational ethnographies will require adaptations of the criteria used to judge their quality. We see quality criteria as necessarily contextual and embedded in the epistemic communities with which they are associated (Schwartz-Shea, 2006), rather than abstract concepts or hard and fast prescriptions. In light of the above, we believe that organizational ethnography might be best judged on the basis of professional ethos, ethics and some very practical and down to earth guidelines, which we present below (see also Czarniawska, 2014; Kociatkiewicz & Kostera, 2014).

First of all, as discussed earlier in the chapter, organizational ethnography, just like cultural anthropology, uses *thick description*, that is, it attempts to depict and understand meanings and contexts of the observed situations (Geertz, 1973). It is important not to confuse thick description with an 'exhaustive listing of details'. Instead it should be understood as 'a nuanced portrait of cultural layers' (Schwartz-Shea, 2006, p. 101). Building on this point, the quality of ethnographic work can be judged by its ability to convey an embodied sense of participants' experiences (Richardson, 2000). In this context some scholars talk about the criterion of credibility (e.g. Tracy, 2010). According to Cunliffe (2010, p. 231), for example, ethnographic 'validity' is based on the credibility of the text, which ought to contain detailed descriptions that grasp 'the intricacies of life in that setting'. This description needs to contain 'textual texturing' understood as the 'piling on of thing on top of thing, act on top of an act, describing, thickly, a particular activity, setting, individual' (Yanow, 2012, p. 36).

Second, *constant problematization* of the observed reality, an effort not to take anything for granted, appears to be particularly important for organizational ethnography, as what we are studying may often appear 'mundane' and 'everyday' (Czarniawska-Jorges, 1992). Third, many scholars see 'in-depth modes of inquiry' (Brannan et al., 2012, p. 8) as a hallmark of good organizational ethnography. The written effect of the study should therefore reflect the *personal and direct engagement in the field*, although how this is realized in practice might vary depending on the given forms of ethnography and can, for example, be accomplished jointly by a team of researchers, as is the case in team ethnography, or entail participation in virtual communities, as is accomplished in netnography.

An additional aspect of quality in ethnographic research concerns the *reliability of the description*, which means that persuasive stories from the field are able to offer a diverse and complex picture, enabling the reader to look upon the described situations from different angles and viewpoints

(Czarniawska, 1999). This entails using genres and styles that enable the researcher to depict dynamics and processes (Van Maanen, 1988). In this context one can also discuss the multisitedness of organizational ethnography understood as mapping different perspectives and cultural phenomena 'across various levels and/or departments and/or actors and/or time periods' (Yanow, 2009, p. 192).

Furthermore, organizational ethnographies should also strive to provide a *contribution* to our understanding of social life that is predicated upon the authors' 'deeply grounded (if embedded) ... perspective', which is conveyed in the ethnographic text (Richardson, 2000, p. 254). Ethnographies are also expected to generate *impact* and to move the reader both emotionally and intellectually (Richardson, 2000). In this context Tracy (2010) talks about *resonance*, in which she includes an aesthetic and evocative representation. In engaged organizational ethnography, as in public ethnography, impact is associated with the transformative potential of the study and its ability to open up spaces for dialogue, audience's learning and reflexivity (Mosher, 2013). On a related note, Watson (2011) calls for ethnographies that are relevant to practice.

Similarly, demonstrated *reflexivity* on the part of the researcher, including considerations of researcher positionality, is now a commonly used criterion for assessing the quality of ethnographic work (Schwartz-Shea, 2006; Watson, 2011). This should include all layers of encounters and their emotions in *the field* as these affect the fieldwork situation and how that situation is understood. Reflexivity 'not only allows room for the imperfectness of the researcher, but also enables a fuller and deeper representation' of the communities about which the researcher is aiming to build an understanding (Koning & Ooi, 2013, p. 29). This, in turn, can enhance the trustworthiness and quality of our ethnographic work. While *representation* and *voice* criteria which refer to the diversity of voices reflected in the ethnographic texts and wider dissemination of results, as well as data collection and feedback mechanisms (Mosher, 2013), are

important in all organizational ethnographies, they are of particular significance for engaged ethnographies.

Using *combined fieldwork methods* (Ybema et al., 2009) and *transparency* understood as ‘a detailed account of “exposure” to and in a field setting’ (Yanow, 2009, p. 192) combined with a systematic, albeit also simultaneously flexible, approach to the research process and a detailed account of one’s procedures are yet further means of establishing *the trustworthiness* of ethnographies. Finally, it is important to point out that good organizational ethnographies also showcase *meaningful coherence* (Tracy, 2010), which applies to the consistency between the stated goals, methods and interpretations.

CONCLUSION

As we have tried to argue in this chapter, organizational ethnography is a vibrant strand of research in management studies. It is a dynamic field open to change with regards to the ‘doing’, ‘writing’, ‘thinking’ and its ‘focus’. Its core objective, however, and most likely its persistent strength, is that those engaged in organizational ethnography strive to shed light on the complexities of day-to-day ‘organizational’ lives. In addressing ‘how and why multiple accounts and conflicting views are at play in a specific context’ (Rouleau et al., 2014, p. 4), organizational ethnography is open to the unexpected. It is focused on discovery and on challenging the taken for granted. It has thus offered an important contribution to organizational and management studies and promises to continue to do so.

REFERENCES

- Agar, Michael (1986) *Speaking of Ethnography*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Agar, Michael (2010) On the Ethnographic Part of the Mix: A Multi-Genre Tale of the Field. *Organizational Research Methods*, 13(2): 286–303.
- Bate, Paul (1997) Whatever Happened to Organizational Anthropology? A Review of the Field of Organizational Ethnography and Anthropological Studies. *Human Relations*, 50(9): 1147–75.
- Behar, Ruth (1996) *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology that Breaks your Heart*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Börjesson, Ulrika (2013) From Shadow to Person: Exploring Roles in Participant Observations in an Eldercare Context. *Qualitative Social Work*, 13: 406–20.
- Bowler Jr, Gary (2010) Netnography: A Method Specifically Designed to Study Cultures and Communities Online. *The Qualitative Report*, 15(5): 1270–5.
- Brannan, Matthew, Mike Rowe and Frank Worthington (2012) Editorial for the Journal of Organizational Ethnography: Time for a New Journal, a Journal for New Times. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, 1(1): 5–14.
- Burawoy, Michael (2001) Manufacturing the Global. *Ethnography*, 2(2): 147–59.
- Burkitt, Ian (2012) Emotional Reflexivity: Feeling, Emotion and Imagination in Reflexive Dialogues. *Sociology*, 46(3): 458–72.
- Chrostowski, Aleksander and Monika Kostera (2011) Etnografia jako narzędzie diagnostyczne w procesie doradztwa naukowego. *Problemy Zarządzania*, 9(2): 30–50.
- Clair, Robin Patric (2012) Engaged Ethnography and the Story(ies) of the Anti-sweatshop Movement. *Cultural Studies↔Critical Methodologies*, 12(2): 132–45.
- Clifford, James (1986) Introduction: Partial Truths. In: James Clifford and George E. Marcus (eds.) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1–26.
- Creswell, John (2007) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design. Choosing among Five Approaches*. London: Sage.
- Cunliffe, Ann (2002) Social Poetics as Management Inquiry: A Dialogical Approach. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 11(2): 128–46.
- Cunliffe, Ann (2003) Reflexive Inquiry in Organizational Research: Questions and Possibilities. *Human Relations*, 56(8): 983–1003.
- Cunliffe Ann (2008) Orientations to Social Constructionism: Relationally Responsive Social Constructionism and its Implications for Knowledge and Learning. *Management Learning*, 39(2): 123–39.

- Cunliffe, Ann (2010) Retelling the Tales of the Field: In Search of Organizational Ethnography 20 Years On. *Organizational Research Methods*, 13(2): 224–39.
- Czarniawska, Barbara (1999) *Writing Management: Organization Theory as a Literary Genre*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Czarniawska, Barbara (2007) *Shadowing and other Techniques for doing Fieldwork in Modern Societies*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press.
- Czarniawska, Barbara (2014) *Social Science Research: From Field to Desk*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Czarniawska-Joerges, Barbara (1992) *Exploring Complex Organizations: A Cultural Perspective*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Delbridge, Rick (1998) *Life on the Line in Contemporary Manufacturing: The Workplace Experience of Lean Production and the 'Japanese' Model*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Doloriert, Claire and Sally Sambrook (2012) Organizational Autoethnography. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, 1(1): 83–95.
- Down, Simon (2012) A Historiographical Account of Workplace and Organizational Ethnography. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, 1(1): 72–82.
- Edwards, Paul and Jacques Bélanger (2008) Generalizing from Workplace Ethnographies. From Induction to Theory. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 37(3): 291–313.
- Falzon, Mark-Anthony (ed) (2009) *Multi-sited Ethnography: Theory, Praxis and Locality in Contemporary Research*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Fayard, Anne-Laure and John Van Maanen (2015) Making Culture Visible: Reflections on Corporate Ethnography. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, 4(1): 4–27.
- Fine, Gary Alan, Calvin Morrill, and Sharmi Surianarain (2009) Ethnography in Organizational Settings. In: David Buchanan and Alan Bryman (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Research Methods*. London: Sage, 602–19.
- Geertz, Clifford (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Ghorashi, Halleh and Harry Wels (2009) Beyond Complicity: A Plea for Engaged Ethnography. In: Sierk Ybema, Dvora Yanow, Harry Wels and Frans Kamsteeg (eds.) *Organizational Ethnography: Studying the Complexities of Everyday Life*. Los Angeles: Sage, 231–52.
- Goffman, Ervin (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Doubleday.
- Goodall Jr, Harold (2000) *Writing the New Ethnography*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira.
- Gouldner, Alvin (1954) *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy*. New York: Free Press.
- Graeber, David (2004) *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press.
- Guba, E. and Yvonna Lincoln (2005) Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences. In: Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 191–216.
- Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Atkinson (2007) *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* (3rd ed.). Routledge, London.
- Hannerz, Ulf (2003) Being there... and there... and there! Reflections on Multi-site Ethnography. *Ethnography*, 4(2): 201–16.
- Haynes, Katherine (2019) Autoethnography. In: Catherine Cassell, Ann Cunliffe and Gina Grandy (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods: Methods and Traditions*. London: Sage, 17–32.
- Hibbert, Paul, John Sillince, Thomas Diefenbach, and Ann Cunliffe (2014) Relationally Reflexive Practice: A Generative Approach to Theory Development in Qualitative Research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 17(3): 278–98.
- Hodson, Randy (2004) A Meta-Analysis of Workplace Ethnographies: Race, Gender, and Employee Attitudes and Behaviors. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 33(1): 4–38.
- Hodson, Randy (2008) Workplace Ethnography (WE) Project, 1944–2002 (ICPSR 3979). www.sociology.ohio-state.edu/rdh/welist.htm
- Holmes, Douglas and George Marcus (2005) Refunctioning Ethnography: The Challenge of an Anthropology of the Contemporary. In: Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1099–113.
- Holmes, Douglas and George Marcus (2006) Fast Capitalism: Para-ethnography and the Rise of the Symbolic Analyst. In: Melissa Fisher and Greg Downey (eds.) *Frontiers of Capital: Ethnographic Reflections on the New Economy*. London: Duke University Press, 33–57.

- Humphreys, Michael (2005) Reflexivity and Autoethnographic Vignettes. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(6): 840–60.
- Islam, Gazi (2015) Practitioners as Theorists: Para-ethnography and the Collaborative Study of Contemporary Organizations. *Organizational Research Methods*, 18(2): 231–51.
- Jarzabkowski, Paula, Rebacca Bednarek and Laure Cabantous (2015) Conducting Global Team-based Ethnography: Methodological Challenges and Practical Methods. *Human Relations*, 68(1): 3–33.
- Kociatkiewicz, Jerzy and Monika Kostera (2014) Zaangażowane badania jakościowe. *Problemy Zarządzania*, vol. 12, nr 1 (45): 9–17. DOI: 10.7172/1644-9584.45.1.
- Koning, Juliette and Can Seng Ooi (2013) Awkward Encounters and Ethnography. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 8(1): 16–32.
- Kostera, Monika (2007) *Organizational Ethnography: Methods and Inspirations*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Kostera, Monika (2012) *Organizations and Archetypes*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Kozinets, Robert V (2002) The Field Behind the Screen: Using Netnography for Marketing Research in Online Communities. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 39(1): 61–72.
- Kozinets, Robert V (2015). *Netnography*. London: Sage.
- Kozinets, Robert V (2019) Netnography for Management and Business Research. In: Catherine Cassell, Ann Cunliffe and Gina Grandy (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods: Methods and Traditions*. London: Sage, 384–98.
- Kunda, Gideon (1992) *Engineering Culture: Control and Commitment in a High-Tech Corporation*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Lassiter, Luke and Elizabeth Campbell (2010) What Will we have Ethnography Do? *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(9): 757–67.
- Latour, Bruno and Stephen Woolgar (1979) *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Learmonth, Mark and Michael Humphreys (2012) Autoethnography and Academic Identity: Glimpsing Business School Doppelgängers. *Organization*, 19(1): 99–117.
- Lichterhan, Paul (2015) Interpretive Reflexivity in Ethnography. *Ethnography*, 18(1): 35–45. DOI: 10.1177/1466138115592418.
- Locke, Karen (2011) Field Research Practice in Management and Organization Studies: Reclaiming its Tradition of Discovery. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 5(1): 613–52.
- Luthans, Fred, Ivana Milosevic, Beth A. Bechky, Edgar H. Schein, Susan Wright, John Van Maanen, and Davydd J. Greenwood (2013) Reclaiming 'Anthropology: The Forgotten Behavioral Science in Management History' – Commentaries. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, 2(1): 92–116.
- Marcus, George (1995) Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-sited Ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24(1): 95–117.
- Marcus, George E. and Michael M. Fischer (1986) *Anthropology as Cultural Critique. An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Mills, C. Wright (1959) *The Sociological Imagination*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Mosher, Heather (2013) A Question of Quality: The Art/Science of Doing Collaborative Public Ethnography. *Qualitative Research*, 13(4): 428–41.
- Murthy, Dhiraj (2013) Ethnographic Research 2.0: The Potentialities of Emergent Digital Technologies for Qualitative Organizational Research. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, 2(1): 23–36.
- Neyland, Daniel (2008) *Organizational Ethnography*. London: Sage.
- Pader, Ellen (2006) Seeing with an Ethnographic Sensibility: Explorations beneath the Surface of Public Policies. In: Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea (eds.) *Interpretation and Method. Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*. New York: M. E. Sharpe, 161–75.
- Pillow, Wanda (2003) Confession, Catharsis, or Cure? Rethinking the Uses of Reflexivity as Methodological Power in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(2): 175–96.
- Polanyi, Michael (1958/1974) *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Prasad, Anshuman, Pushkala Prasad and Raza Mir (2011) One Mirror in Another: Managing Diversity and the Discourse of Fashion. *Human Relations*, 64(5): 703–24.

- Reich, Jennifer (2015) Old Methods and New Technologies: Social Media and Shifts in Power in Qualitative Research. *Ethnography*, 16(4): 394–415.
- Richardson, Laurel (2000) Evaluating Ethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 6(2): 253–5.
- Robben, Antonius (2007) Reflexive Ethnography: Introduction. In: Antonius Robben and Jeffrey Sluka (eds.) *Ethnographic Fieldwork: An Anthropological Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 443–6.
- Rosen, Michael (2000) *Turning Words, Spinning Worlds: Chapters in Organizational Ethnography*. London: Routledge.
- Rouleau, Linda, Mark de Rond and Genevieve Musca (2014) From the Ethnographic Turn to New Forms of Organizational Ethnography. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, 3(1): 2–9.
- Sambrook, Sally (2015) In (Re)search of the Self: Autoethnography in HRD Research. In: Mark Saunders and Paul Tosey (eds.) *Handbook of Research Methods on Human Resource Development*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 92–107.
- Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine (2006) Judging Quality: Evaluative Criteria and Epistemic Communities. In: Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea (eds.) *Interpretation and Method. Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*. New York: M. E. Sharpe, 89–113.
- Selznick, Philip (1949) *TVA and the Grassroots. A Study in the Sociology of Formal Organization*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Smets, Michael, Gary Burke, Paula Jarzabkowski and Paul Spee (2014) Charting New Territory for Organizational Ethnography: Insights from a Team-based video Ethnography of Reinsurance Trading. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, 3(1): 10–26.
- Tomkins, Leah and Virginia Eatough (2010) Towards an Integrative Reflexivity in Organizational Research. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 5(2): 162–81.
- Tracy, Sarah (2010) Qualitative Quality: Eight 'big-tent' Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10): 837–51.
- Van Maanen, John (1988) *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Van Maanen, John (2006) Ethnography Then and Now. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 1(1): 13–21.
- Van Maanen, John (2011) Ethnography as Work: Some Rules of Engagement. *Journal of Management Studies*, 48(1): 218–34.
- Van Maanen, John (2015) The Present of Things Past: Ethnography and Career Studies. *Human Relations*, 68(1): 35–53.
- Watson, Tony (1994) *In Search of Management: Culture, Chaos, and Control in Managerial Work*. London: Routledge.
- Watson, Tony (2011) Ethnography, Reality, and Truth: The Vital Need for Studies of 'How things Work' in Organizations and Management. *Journal of Management Studies*, 48(1): 202–17.
- Watson, Tony (2012) Making Organizational Ethnography. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, 1(1): 15–22.
- Wittel, Andreas (2000) Ethnography on the Move: From Field to Net to Internet. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 1(1). <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0001213>
- Wright, Susan (1994) Culture in Anthropology and Organizational Studies. In: Susan Wright (ed.) *Anthropology of Organizations*. London, New York: Routledge, 1–31.
- Yanow, Dvora (2006) Neither Rigorous nor Objective? Interrogating Criteria for Knowledge Claims in Interpretive Science. In: Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea (eds.) *Interpretation and Method. Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*. New York: M. E. Sharpe, 67–88.
- Yanow, Dvora (2009) Organizational Ethnography and Methodological Angst: Myths and Challenges in the Field. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 4(2): 186–99.
- Yanow, Dvora (2012) Organizational Ethnography between Toolbox and World-making. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, 1(1): 31–42.
- Yanow, Dvora, and Karin Geuijen (2009) Annotated Bibliography. Defining 'Organizational Ethnography' selection criteria. In: Sierk Ybema, Dvora Yanow, Harry Wels and Frans Kamsteeg (eds.) *Organizational*

- Ethnography: Studying the Complexities of Everyday Life*. Los Angeles: Sage, 253–60.
- Yanow, Dvora, Sierk Ybema and Merlijn van Hulst (2012) Practising Organizational Ethnography. In: Gillian Symon and Catherine Cassell (eds.) *Qualitative Organizational Research: Core Methods and Current Challenges*. London: Sage, 331–350.
- Ybema, Sierk and Frans Kamsteeg (2009) Making the Familiar Strange: A Case for Disengaged Organizational Ethnography. In: Sierk Ybema, Dvora Yanow, Harry Wels and Frans Kamsteeg (eds.) *Organizational Ethnography: Studying the Complexities of Everyday Life*. Los Angeles: Sage, 101–19.
- Ybema, Sierk, Dvora Yanow, Harry Wels and Frans Kamsteeg (2009) *Organizational Ethnography: Studying the Complexities of Everyday Life*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Action Research: Knowing and Changing (in) Organizational Contexts

Giuseppe Scaratti, Mara Gorli, Laura Galuppo and
Silvio Ripamonti

INTRODUCTION

The Action Research (AR) approach occupies an important and innovative position in the varied field of qualitative research for business and management. By incorporating different positionings, epistemic stances, and distinctive features and methods, AR challenges the traditional ways to interpret research, generate knowledge, and view change.

In terms of knowledge production, it goes beyond the boundaries of traditional theoretical and disciplinary approaches, which define research topics and establish a linear sequence of hypothesis application and result verification. Knowledge in AR is a circular and participative process generated by examination of questions, issues, and problems relating to real contexts by means of explicit and implicit forms of negotiation and social construction involving multiple actors, a wide range of discipline-specific bodies of knowledge, and both material and immaterial dimensions (Gibbons et al., 1994).

The interplay of these two terms – ‘research’ and ‘action’ – both captures and illustrates the structural relationship and interdependence between theory and practice, thinking and doing, researcher and practitioner, academy and other domains that the AR approach allows. While certain aspects of traditional research are shared by AR (from research questions to discussion of results within the scientific community), AR also brings to the fore the complexity and relationality arising from the needs, expectations, and change dynamics concerning the practices and organizational contexts considered.

Research that starts from the problems generated by organizational contexts and aims to produce change necessarily requires a radical reassessment of the relationship between knowledge and action, and the related image of the ‘armchair academic researcher’ (van Marrewijk et al., 2010). AR focuses on the dynamic and complex situations that people face, and therefore on unprecedented and unclear problems for which established

and acquired forms of knowledge (such as those learned from academic textbooks) are not always, or sometimes only marginally, appropriate. Hence, in order to deal with and resolve such problems, it is necessary to assume the risks of a multiple challenge: that of developing local, participative, and contingent solutions with an intentional and limited rationality.

When research strategies deal with the contexts of action and the problems generated by them, they are geared to intercepting a knowledge which exists within, and permeates systems of activity and which, since it is embedded in work practices, is for the most part tacit and unconscious. Such knowledge cannot be identified and understood without first approaching the contexts themselves, and the experiences of the actors and the meanings that they attribute. Involvement of the multiple organizational actors and stakeholders is therefore crucial because they constitute the 'expert system' and are the carriers of the knowledge used, disseminated, and deposited in the everyday work context.

This entails a major shift of perspective whereby consideration of such factors as the rigor and reliability of generated knowledge cannot ignore the material and social conditions of its production. The knowledge that is produced therefore requires consensual validation (or at least its recognition by the various actors and stakeholders involved).

Kurt Lewin has famously and emblematically illustrated this interplay between theory and practice with two lapidary statements: 'there is nothing more practical than a good theory' and 'if you want to truly understand something, try to change it'. The first statement apparently concerns the need to demonstrate that knowledge (academic, scientific) precedes and leads action, so that the change is conceived as a temporally subsequent application that logically follows theory (Cook & Brown, 1999). The second statement declares the impossibility of ignoring daily life as the primary source from which human beings draw their meanings and courses of action.

Hence the statement serves to direct attention to how people use knowledge by adapting it to what different situations require.

When reconfiguring the relationship between theory and practice, it is necessary to clarify certain aspects: in particular, the role of the action researcher; the involvement of plural organizational actors and stakeholders; the negotiation of the knowledge objectives to be pursued; and their internal and external expendability.

In this regard, Reason & Bradbury (2008) provide a general definition of AR as a family of participatory approaches concerned with developing knowledge and change. The approaches belonging to this 'family' display great variety but have some key characteristics in common:

- contextual sensitivity (focus on local problems and situated/embedded knowledge);
- the production of relevant knowledge and change through co-generation and dialog, reflexivity, polyphony, and pluri-vocality;
- the promotion of people participation and multi-stakeholdership in contributing to knowledge and change construction;
- a shared problem-setting and research agenda (governance of processes and outcomes);
- political orientation (trust in democracy; researchers as reflexive and engaged scholars).

This definition seemingly captures the main features of AR while designating a broad spectrum of meanings. In order to provide a conceptual and operational framework for the AR approach, in this chapter we will provide a historical reconstruction of its development. In so doing, we will express our position, highlighting some distinctive features. We will then examine three turning points in the process of AR that highlight its distinctive character and the issues that it must address. These three turning points are the start-up of an AR process, its management, and its conclusion: they do not convey a standardized view of AR; rather, they phenomenologically emphasize the dynamic through which each AR unfolds, albeit in

always changing, specific, and contextualized declination. Two case experiences will be used to illustrate the *crafting* of AR processes, and how their nature and quality differ from any other form of research in organizational contexts. The conclusions will summarize the most important implications of the AR-based approach.

THE HISTORICAL–CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: AR AS AN EMERGENCE OF DIFFERENT TRADITIONS

To start with the various traditions that have contributed to the debate surrounding AR, there are numerous historical reconstructions of the earliest stages and precursors of AR (Heller, 2004; Reason & Bradbury, 2008; Bruno et al., 2010).

Lewin is acknowledged as having introduced the expression ‘action research’ in 1946, conceiving it as a social experiment which goes beyond the traditional linear relation between theory and practice, involving people in the process of knowledge production. Other founding figures were contributing to the emergence of the phenomenon already during the inter-war period: the clinical and social work carried out at the Tavistock Clinic from the 1930s through to 1946; the school of Moreno, which was critical of conventional social sciences and instigated a participatory approach in which the researcher does not stand outside the field of inquiry; and Saul Alinsky, who was active from the 1930s to the 1960s in contexts far removed from those just mentioned and worked as a sociologist at the School of Chicago. One key innovation to come from the qualitative tradition of the School of Chicago, alongside its empirical bent and emphasis on practical fieldwork, was the connection between the empirical approach and the endeavor of researchers to produce knowledge useful in addressing real social problems.

It was the western tradition (Susman & Evered, 1978; Elden & Chisholm, 1993; Reason & Bradbury, 2001), in particular, that recognized the importance to AR of experiences gained, during and after Lewin’s time, at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in London, founded in 1946 following the absorption of the Tavistock Clinic into the national health system.

From the 1950s onwards, the socio-technical approach – grown and developed at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations – and the Lewinian concept of action research took root in Scandinavia. It did so initially with the Industrial Democracy Project in Norway, a joint project between the federation of entrepreneurs and the trade unions, which was particularly active during the 1960s. From Norway, the approach spread to Sweden and Denmark, until in the mid-1980s it began to decline, also because of funding cuts resulting from the difficulty of disseminating good practical examples from one organizational context to others. From the second half of the 1980s onwards there took shape a new paradigm of AR, known as the ‘network approach’, which was based on the ideas of Habermas (Rasmussen, 2004).

The evolution of Lewin’s original insight helps us to understand certain characteristics of the AR approach. From the markedly experimental approach, the relationship between research and action evolved into the intersubjective construction of knowledge. Having started as a form of experimental social engineering aimed at tackling practical problems, AR has gradually come to be associated with a concern for complex social issues that cannot be reduced to single variables. The researcher is no longer a neutral and detached actor, but a co-producer and co-author of change, which he or she contributes to generating and developing. In relating to the, sometimes complex, need for transformation, the researcher enters into relationship with the problems of existence, and is thus not separate from the world but immersed in it.

The plural declination of the AR approach relies also on different epistemic perspectives (Cunliffe, 2011), which generate connected ways of interpreting and applying AR.

Cassell and Johnson (2006) distinguish four main expressions of AR: Experimental Action Research, Inductive Action Research, Participatory Action Research, and Deconstructive Action Research.

The first emphasizes the intervention of scientists in real-life social situations aimed at ameliorating practical problems of actors over a period of time. Key words are ‘diagnosing–planning–acting’ and evaluating, ‘positioning’ in an objectivist research approach. This is anchored in a positivist or neo-positivist concept of knowledge so as to ensure both its accumulation and social progress or emancipation.

The second kind of AR supports the joint interpretive understanding of organizational participants’ practical reasoning as ‘theories-in-use’. Through the involvement of organizational participants, the aim is to engender reflexive learning (Argyris & Schön, 1989) whereby people can ‘surface and question their intuitive understandings, undertake on-the-spot experiments ... [and] engage in reflective conversations with their situation’ (Schön, 1983, p. 265). The principal key word in this case is ‘reflexive learning’.

The third is focused on enabling as many stakeholders as possible to participate actively throughout the entire knowledge and change process. This process is expected to change the nature of the relationship among participants. The focus is on facilitating democratic agreements, on promoting participant emancipation and critical consciousness. Key words are ‘empowerment’, ‘inclusion’, and ‘polyphony’.

Both inductive and participatory AR rely on a subjectivist epistemic stance based on an interpretive and constructionist orientation: AR leads to a reflexive exploration of naturally occurring actions, interactions, and conversations to produce situated learning and change.

Deconstructive Action Research focuses on unsettling discourses and points of contradiction as strategic opportunities for organizational change (Treleaven, 2001; Shotter, 2010). By not finding answers to problems, but rather by ‘problematizing answers’, AR helps the people involved to think about their own and others’ thinking so as to question the hegemonic, the familiar, and the taken for granted. Key words are ‘critical reflexivity’ and ‘pluri-vocality’. The epistemic stance is intersubjective and refers to a pragmatic knowing, detecting in situ knowing from within and withness thinking (Shotter, 2008). AR in this case is seen as an embedded and embodied critical exploration leading to new (transitory) understandings and alternative strategies of action.

Among these multiple epistemic perspectives we can also highlight the different possible purposes that AR provides in order to study, transform, and interact with organizational landscapes:

- a pragmatic orientation (facilitating and planning effective organizational processes/changes; getting closer to management’s and organizational needs; and fostering research relevance);
- a learning orientation (researching on one’s own learning and professional practice; questioning and analyzing organizational processes/practices; developing communities of practice);
- an emancipatory orientation (exploring and fostering new forms of entrepreneurship; empowering organizational communities; giving voices to oppressed/minority groups).

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF AR

Compared to other forms of research, AR seems endowed with a distinctive nature and well suited to situations of complexity and change, where the organizational contexts in question are subject to turbulence, instability, and uncertainty. Such situations are characterized by powerful elements of

changeability and shifting balances, and are marked by a transition from the forms of knowledge that are stable and well-established in habitual practices and routines to others that are characterized by a greater dynamicity and changeability.

Transitory knowledge, which is bound to particular uses in context, can help the actors recognize problems and assign names and labels to objects and instruments, and give meaning to local and situation-based events.

Since different perspectives and purposes may be adopted in applying AR, we highlight transversal and distinctive features that, in our view, characterize AR as a particular way to produce knowledge and change: situativity, relationality, transformativity, and reflexivity.

Situativity

Situativity means that AR derives from direct engagement with real and complex problems in natural contexts and in social situations, the identification and definition of which are heavily dependent on representations by the actors involved, and the solution of which is not immediately apparent, nor given, but requires engagement, sharing, and the construction of meaning. The knowledge produced is local and situated because it is dependent on both the manner in which it is constructed and used and on the manner in which it is distributed, circulated, and appropriated by the actors.

Relationality

AR activates knowledge by means of relationship because it involves several stakeholders, each bearing different points of view and each contributing to knowledge, as no preconceived forms of knowledge or solutions exist when dealing with complex problems. Relationality also entails processes of co-creation of knowledge and co-research.

Transformativity

AR is directed toward action; in other words it aims, in concert with the actors, to discover shared ways of promoting, initiating, and managing change, thereby fostering an evolutionary transformation of existing situations. Transformation may involve a change of behavior as much as wider and more complex objectives of emancipation, and clarification of contradictions and dilemmas.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is the process of exercising critical thought on one's own practices and gleaning the various meanings that actors attribute to them with a view to gaining awareness and gathering indications for future transformation. It triggers the possibility to disrupt the existing system of activities and open an expansive learning process (Engeström, 1987).

Situativity (being close to the contexts), relationality (weaving relationships with different stakeholders), transformativity (seeking developmental changes), and reflexivity (supporting expansive learning processes), underpin a socio-constructionist epistemological framework. The ever-changing declination of these features engenders several gradients and modulations of intensity related to the adoption of the specific epistemic perspectives described above (diagnosing–planning–acting; joint understanding of theories in use; participation throughout the process; unsettling discourses; and problematizing answers). In order to highlight how such distinctive features can be articulated in dealing with specific contexts and situated challenges, in the next sections we will examine two field experiences, which will be analyzed through key phases of the AR process: how to start the AR, how to manage its process, and how to conclude it. These are three phases crucial for how relevant

knowledge and change can be produced and developed, and this is why we refer to them as three *turning points*. Our analysis will first underline the specific aspects of each turning point, and then describe the related scenario of the two illustrating cases that triggered different ways to produce and work with knowledge and change in organizational contexts.

THE FIRST TURNING POINT: STARTING THE ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS

The initial phase of any AR is crucial for determining the quality and development of the process of knowledge production and change within an organization. In this phase, five main key points, which we name process *nodes*, constitute the premises for initiating that process.

Each node guarantees the continuity of the work and contributes to the creation of sustainable working conditions with the organizational actors. After a presentation of the five nodes, we will illustrate their operational translation into two real cases of AR.

First Node: Constructing the Question

The understanding, articulation, and co-construction of the question during the interaction with the organization (from now on, we may also refer to the ‘client’, meaning the organizational partner for an AR process) is the first central node in the initial stage. The ‘problem’ needing to be addressed in the AR is not pre-set, neither is it determined by everything that the client shares with the action researcher (or ‘consultant’) and presents as being the critical points in the organization. It is the result of a coming together of more or less broad questions and a process of gradual focalization which will involve both the researcher and the client. This gradual focusing on the object of the AR

has the aim of establishing a partial but not definitive individuation of the themes in which the organization wishes to invest.

Second Node: Identifying Key Resources

The second node in the start-up phase concerns identifying the resources that are to be allocated to the AR process. Resources are both financial and related to the level of engagement that is thought possible with the people within the organization. The levels and possible outcomes of AR depend also on the type of mobilization that the different organizational actors, in concert with the researcher, deem appropriate in a given situation.

Third Node: Establishing the Advisory Board

The third node is the establishment of an advisory board to accompany the AR process throughout its development and to regulate it on the basis of indicators provided by the organization during the process. It is a work group made up of researchers and organization representatives tasked with following the developments of the AR and monitoring the connection among the various levels of the organization.

Fourth Node: Constructing the Work Setting

The fourth node concerns the construction of the work setting that is to be presented to the AR participants. This is the first task of the advisory board, which must go into the details of the AR process, defining:

- which people and which groups are to be involved, according to the limits set by the client;
- the sustainability of the intervention;
- the AR timeframe;

Fifth Node: Constructing the Research Tools

The fifth node concerns the identification and design of the research tools. An initial draft of the prompts to be used with the participants by means of specific work tools is important in order to predict and expect a range of possible outcomes.

In handling these aspects, it is crucial to get close to the actors, listening to and exchanging with them the implicit and stated theories and hypotheses regarding the functioning of the organization. In this process of gradual mutual acquaintance, the most important work tool is the one-to-one and group interview, which makes it possible to harvest various ways to conceive the organization and represent its problems. The AR approach is to 'enter on tiptoe' into an organization, assuming an attitude of respectful curiosity.

Case A – Becoming new managers: an action research in a Federation of Nursery Schools

The AR project described here took place in a Federation of Nursery Schools, a Northern Italian organization that manages services and centers for child education in nursery schools, and provides training, consultancy, and innovation strategies. The Federation coordinates 160 schools, organized into smaller networks. At the beginning of our intervention, each network was coordinated by one pedagogical manager and one administrative manager. These two roles represented two cultural anchors: the pedagogical one, for which managing meant planning and supporting the educational activities; and the administrative one, in which managing meant providing advice and assistance in running the service. This structure had functioned effectively for many years. However, as the Federation became larger and more complex, several limitations were recognized, including fragmented or chaotic communication between the administrative and pedagogical areas, and a lack of flexibility in dealing with

complex critical situations. It was thus decided that a new role was needed: the pedagogical and administrative roles were merged into one, which resulted in new responsibilities, new actions and practices, and a structural and culture change. Whereas, in the past, managers had used either their pedagogical or administrative content-driven expertise to maintain well-established procedures, a clear division of labor (Scaratti et al., 2009), and defined role boundaries, in the new organization managers were required to cross boundaries and become more process-experts, able to analyze complex situations, mediate conflicts, activate networks and relations, and develop the problem-solving skills of other employees.

To deal with this situation, the president of the Federation asked us to assist the new managers in building and interpreting their new role. The initial request was a consultancy project to help the managers interpret their new role in a shared manner. In particular, the request was to conduct initial research to identify the challenges and critical issues recurrent in the pedagogical and managerial coordination of nursery schools. The research would then serve as the basis for defining a set of skills which the Federation's managers should possess and then organizing a training course to equip the new coordinators with those skills.

The First Node: Constructing the Question

The clients requested a research process that would describe the competences profiles of the two categories of managers – administrative and pedagogical – and then create a single profile comprising the distinctive characteristics of both. The clients also stressed the need to change the relationship between two professional cultures in the Federation. The pedagogical and administrative units had always kept themselves very distinct and distant, each of them claiming to

be the organization's most important component. A solution merging the administrative and pedagogical roles would therefore have to remedy a long-standing conflict, and it would have to resolve issues related to the history and culture of the Federation.

Faced with this situation, before devising a new skills profile, we deemed it crucial to accompany the two managerial groups to a mutual cultural rapprochement. During the initial discussions with the clients, therefore, the research and consultancy design was partially changed. We proposed an AR plan in which the pedagogical and administrative managers would meet personally to discuss the challenges and benefits of their new role, and how they could combine their skills to build a repertoire of shared practices.

The Second Node: Identifying Key Resources

We therefore agreed with the top management of the Federation the possibility of an AR pathway, whereby both the pedagogical and administrative managers could jointly construct their new role. The hypothesis was that these managers could play the role of protagonists and co-designers of their new profile and competences by integrating originally divided professional cultures through exchanges and dialog. The action research was allocated a suitable amount of investment in terms of days and budget.

The Third Node: Establishing the Advisory Board

A temporary working group – Advisory Board – was created to support the AR. It was composed by the academic researchers, the president of the Federation, and two members of the managerial board. The advisory group had the following tasks:

- to identify a group of willing participants who could be actively involved in the AR process to bring into focus the challenges of the new role and the professional practices that might be promoted in order to address them effectively;
- to plan the AR timeframe and design the necessary work tools;
- to monitor the progress of the AR and its results in terms of knowledge and change;
- to manage communication of the AR results in order to involve the rest of the Federation in reflection on the new managerial practices to be developed.

The Fourth Node: Constructing the Work Setting

The group of participants (25 in total) identified by the Advisory Board was made up of both pedagogical and administrative managers with sufficient experience and the desire to explore their work practices in order to build new repertoires. Selected were not only coordinators with experiences of success but also those who had faced problems and critical situations, the purpose being to identify issues and challenges for building new forms of acting. The group's task was to produce ethnographic accounts relating to their everyday work experience.

The participants were involved in eight meetings over a one-year period, with the supervision of the academic researchers/consultants.

The Fifth Node: Constructing the Research Tools

The research tools were designed by the Advisory Board in response to a threefold challenge: 1) to help the managers reflect on which implicit frameworks had informed their daily practices; 2) to help them share the knowledge arising from their previous and current experience; 3) to allow them to cooperatively revise their practices and culture according to the changing organizational needs.

The following research tools were designed for the aforementioned purposes:

- a reflexive writing tool to explore the managers' daily practices and then discuss them in dedicated work groups;
- workshops within the Advisory Board to monitor the progress of the project;
- a final workshop presenting the results of the AR project to the rest of the managers and the entire Federation.

Case B – A Healthcare Organization in search of authors

The second case that we describe in illustration of the specific features and challenges inherent in starting and conducting an AR process relates to a large-scale reorganization initiative involving several community services and a hospital in a Local Health District in Northern Italy.

We conducted AR with a large number of healthcare professionals involved in preparing the ground for, and implementing, a change that had been decided top-down at regional level. While the top-down change concerned the relocation to a new hospital, the improvement of forms of collaboration among disciplines, and a better integration among professionals, the AR, as agreed along the process, explored new bottom-up initiatives and strategies for interpreting and translating the broader change.

The First Node: Constructing the Question

We were contacted by the Head of the Training and HR Department of the Local Health District, who did so on the basis of personal acquaintance. A previous experience of AR in his organization had sparked his interest, and that of his staff, in new training and development initiatives drawing on the incoming change opportunities. The Local Health District was to be

reorganized for financial reasons and prepared for relocation to a new hospital. The Head of Training and HR saw this as a promising opportunity to foster and spread the good existing practices throughout the system, to create and develop new ones, and to provide new learning across the organization. In his view, a participatory intervention would prepare the ground for the imminent change so that it was not merely implemented top-down but would also be interpreted and adapted by the practitioners concerned – doctors, nurses, coordinators, and psychologists.

It emerged from the initial conversations that the expected change could bring out issues of integration, communication, and harmonization of procedures and cultures among different professions due to be merged with the reorganization and the hospital's relocation. An AR could provide an important opportunity to engage the practitioners in participative forms of local translation of these challenges, avoiding a top-down decision and forwarding more functional and meaningful operational practices.

The Second Node: Identifying Key Resources

Because he was the Head of Training, our key partner (the client) could rely on the necessary financial support devoted to learning initiatives. He could also count on our mutual interest in developing relevant interventions and in circulating the emerging knowledge both regionally and within the academic field. He was willing to take an active part in the process, to work jointly with his staff and with the academic staff, and to participate in some final writing processes (as, in fact, happened after the intervention). He involved three people from his staff to follow any development of the initiative and support the researchers.

The Third Node: Establishing the Advisory Board

In this way a Advisory Board was formed. Consisting of four people from the Local Health District (Training and HR department), and three academic researchers (two of whom are authors of this chapter), the Advisory Board met periodically to shape and facilitate the development of the process. It closely followed all activities of the groups of participants involved, both through emails exchanged and elaboration of the emerging data, and in vis-à-vis meetings.

The Fourth Node: Constructing the Work Setting

Doctors, nurses, charge nurses, and psychologists were invited to participate on a voluntary basis. Approximately 100 participants agreed to meet once a month (for six months in total, plus an initial meeting and two final events) in groups of about twenty participants for four hours at a time. The groups, representative of identifiable communities of practice (Wenger, 1998; Koch et al., 2002), were drawn from four departments: the local community hospital (doctors and nurses); community nursing (nurses and home visitors); nephrology and dialysis (nurses and managers); and drug addiction and mental health (doctors, nurses, psychologists, and other support staff). Members of the four groups, which proceeded in parallel, worked on three main tasks: conducting a first *exploration of work practices*; *analysis* (critically examining and identifying the best practices and those needing improvement); and planning new *actions* (suggesting specific improvement projects and strategies for the future).

The Fifth Node: Constructing the Research Tools

The steering group agreed that the research tools should detect local practices

and cultures. Practice-based methods, and at-home ethnographically oriented methods (Alvesson, 2009; Tagliaventi & Mattarelli, 2006; Thomson & Hassenkamp, 2008; Tsoukas, 2005) seemed the ones best able to achieve this result, and they were designed and tested with the active involvement of the participants. The aim was to investigate and describe working practices by means of ethnographic and interpretive tools (for details, see Gorli et al., 2016, 2015).

THE SECOND TURNING POINT: MANAGING THE ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS

Managing an AR process requires participants and researchers to generate new knowledge and explore new solutions through a collaborative and recursive path of data gathering, interpretation sharing, design, and commitment to new actions.

The main goals of this phase are therefore: exploring the context with and through the participants' eyes; generating and interpreting data; developing reflexive and open dialog; promoting and valuing participant engagement; and sharing ideas and perspectives to generate new courses of action.

Such a complex path requires the researchers to accomplish several strategic and tactical operations.

In terms of strategy, they must negotiate the AR setting and methods with participants, and manage them during the process.

The setting represents a 'temporary organization', the relational boundaries that 'hold' participants and researchers temporally and spatially. The setting represents a boundary between the 'productive' action within the organization and the reflexive and transformative process surrounding the organization that occurs within the AR context (Ripamonti et al., 2010). It is thanks to this boundary that participants are able to analyze their 'organizational realities' and create discontinuities

and new ways of knowing, acting, and working (Barbieri et al., 2010; Galuppo et al., 2011).

From a tactical point of view, specific techniques and practices must then be negotiated and put into action in order to sustain the generation of new knowledge, new problem-setting, and new solutions.

Since AR is a situated, participatory, transformative, and reflexive process, the setting and tools must be handled in a particular way. They are not defined once and for all by the researchers alone; rather, they are the result of negotiation with participants and vary greatly according to the relational and organizational conditions, as well as the objectives of the AR. Unlike in 'traditional' research, AR settings and techniques are not in themselves a *guarantee of the success of the process*. Other conditions need to be taken into account: the generation of situated knowledge close to contexts and organizational practices; the initiation of dialog and interaction between divergent perspectives; the engagement of all participants; and the promotion of reflexive practices around the theme in question with a view to allowing new representations, new courses of action, and new relationships between the participants and in the organization as a whole. The AR process becomes a microcosm in which researchers and participants tackle new ways of relating in order to re-enact and play out relevant problems related to the organizational context.

ACTION RESEARCH SETTINGS AND TOOLS

In the central phase of the AR process, three levels of knowledge production and change may be identified. All of them are necessary for the construction of a truly dialogic and transformative process. They are the *individual* level, the *social/collective* level, and the *institutional* level. The researcher is responsible for

ensuring that each level receives the necessary attention and that the dialog and connection between them are maintained.

Individual Level

In order to guarantee contextual sensitivity and to value different perspectives and experiences, it is necessary that each participant is allowed to express themselves on the theme and to state their own particular interpretation of it. For the researcher, this means providing space, time, rules of engagement, and relationship – tools that legitimize each and every role and point of view. S/he must listen to all voices and 'languages', and promptly analyze the experiences and work practices of each individual.

Two types of tool may be used in this regard: 1) individual interviews (for instance ethnographic and narrative interviews; interviews with the double; etc.); 2) observational techniques aimed at detecting specific professional practices (for instance participant observation; shadowing; reflective journals or diaries).

These tools belong to the tradition of narrative and ethnographic qualitative research. In AR, such tools are used with a view to generating descriptions, repertoires of practices, symbolic reference systems, perspectives, and possibilities of interpretation that are as 'dense', multiple, and differentiated as possible.

Social/Collective Level

This level, namely the small work group, is crucial for AR. It is thanks to the relationship and dialog between participants that it is possible to construct collaborative and reflexive processes and to experiment with new forms of participation and new organizational solutions. The small group – 8/10 people who meet according to an agenda that is agreed upon with the researcher on

an ad hoc basis – is a ‘place of mediation’ between individual experiences and the experiences of the organization.

Typical techniques for small work groups are: brainstorming, focus groups, case discussions, project works.

A vital element here is the facilitation offered by the researcher, whose task is to guide these groups in such a way as to foster democratic exchange, on the one hand with the possibility of dissent and conflict, on the other with the exercise of reflexive interaction. In order to maintain constant engagement, it is important that the groups assign themselves tasks between each meeting, be it observation, reflection, or attempts to transform certain organizational practices, so as to enable investigation over time of new data that may be included in the ‘community of inquiry’.

Institutional Level

The institutional level is concerned with the legitimation of the AR process and the involvement of actors with strategic and political power inside the organization. From an institutional standpoint, the AR process aims to guarantee the validation and adequate verification of the outcomes, to achieve a cascade effect within the organization as a whole or the external environment, and to mitigate possible resistances arising as a result of hierarchical intervention.

At this level, the work of the Advisory Board, on the one hand, and the organization of collective events on the other, are the primary tools. The researcher is responsible for negotiating periodic Advisory Board meetings throughout the AR process with a view to ensuring ongoing monitoring and legitimation of the work at both the individual and the collective levels. The prediction of moments/ events which are symbolically significant and visible during the AR process is of vital importance in ensuring the legitimacy and visibility of the work process, for instance

alongside specific turning points or on the basis of contingent needs and requests that arise in the field.

The specific task of the researcher is to manage all the three levels responsibly, and to guarantee connections. S/he must do so in negotiation with the actors involved and in accordance with the context, the expectations, and the relational conditions that are in place. The following cases provide a concrete illustration.

Case A – Working on managers’ reflexive writings

In order to help the AR participants explore and revise their managerial practices, we suggested that they periodically write and discuss a reflexive written account. This technique was inspired by Argyris, Putnam, and Smith’s ‘two-column format’ (1985), a narrative and reflective practice developed within the action science field, as well as by Gobo’s ethnographic grid (2008) used to orient the ethnographic and auto-ethnographic observations.

The reflexive written account was organized by a semi-structured grid with three main thematic sections filled in by the area managers, either individually or collectively (see Table 18.1).

The first section (*Critical events column*) asked managers to describe individually a key situation or event in their daily practice. This first column was a description of *fresh events*, recently happened and narrated as freely as possible without any analysis or evaluation.

The second section (*On the spot column*) asked managers to express how their emotional state might be influenced by the situation, together with some first interpretations and thoughts on the event.

The third section (*Group comments column*) provided a specific space to be used only after discussing the critical event within the AR group. Here managers could share and discuss one another’s writings. In this discussion, we as researchers triggered open dialog and

Table 18.1 The grid

<i>Critical event – Individual</i>	<i>On the spot comments – Individual</i>	<i>Group comments</i>
Describe a situation or event in your daily practice that has required all your energy and thinking. Describe the details of what happened: the actors involved, and the organizational and contextual features and characteristics that you consider may be useful in explaining what happened and why.	Describe your emotional response to the situation. Describe your thoughts and interpretations of the event: how might these help explain what happened?	Describe key aspects emerging within the group discussion: ideas, comments, feedback, interpretations, and considerations. Record any new solutions, alternative visions, or new agreements achieved by the group.

alternative interpretations in order to bring to the surface different voices and perspectives and to question what might be taken for granted. While sections 1 and 2 often appeared *reflective*, section 3 was openly *reflexive*, and the researchers acted as catalysts in helping managers question their taken-for-granted assumptions and actions as a means to generate new and alternative interpretations of their role and practices.

About every month, managers wrote at least two accounts of their experience (columns 1 and 2), to be circulated and eventually discussed during the group meetings. These were collected in a blog, and each month two or three writings were voted as the most representative and meaningful cases to be discussed more deeply in the group. This strategy allowed the managers to identify the *hot issues* to be discussed along the way, and to negotiate the AR agenda.

The meetings were organized as follows: first, the chosen writing was read and discussed; as researchers, we then performed a kind of *scaffolding function* (Alby & Zuchermaglio, 2006), helping managers to 1) connect their personal experiences to the story, 2) describe different possible views and strategies of action, and 3) critically question the taken-for-granted knowledge and expertise emerging from their accounts; finally, researchers helped managers negotiate what to write in the third column. This moment represented a way to track how new meanings and practices were being built by the new community.

The above-described AR setting and methods aimed to pursue the following goals. They gave participants opportunities to reflexively explore *how things worked* in their/our organizations. The writing process, followed by dialog, sustained a subjective and intersubjective process of inquiry and confrontation (Cunliffe, 2010; 2013). In the written accounts, managers were required to provide a tale *from within* (Shotter, 1993) of the meaningful events occurring in their daily lives. Each perspective was compared to, and integrated with the others, and then used to compose a new polyphonic account of organizational life and potential opportunities for moving on (Shotter, 2008). In this way, practitioners developed a deeper understanding of the local and contextual underpinnings of their practices and began to reflexively question what was taken for granted.

They sustained participation and learning at individual, collective, and institutional levels. Writing personal accounts allowed deep engagement of writers and readers. The managers' lively accounts became concrete, detailed, and shareable materials. The written nature of the texts facilitated multiple readings and dialog. The first two columns represented individual narration and reflection and provided a way to give voice to every single participant. The space for group dialog and editing of the third column then allowed collective learning (Marshall, 2011). It enabled managers and researchers to tune into other accounts by encountering divergent ideas.

The case described above shows that, if the AR setting and techniques are negotiated and managed functionally, they can provide space, time, and relational conditions that help participants play unexpected roles and experience micro-organizational changes, thereby developing new insights, alternative visions, and transformative solutions (McNiff & Whitehead, 2000; Schön 1983; Mezirow, 1991). An example was the redefinition of the managers' competences profile, more complex and articulated than the previous one: new tasks were added to the daily activities related to institutional functions (Scaratti et al., 2009), while other aspects were shifted and allocated to central organizational units (such as communication and training).

During the AR process it is important that participants progressively increase their autonomy in sharing their experience and reflexively questioning their taken-for-granted assumptions. Thus, while the researchers should take the responsibility and exert their power to ensure the presence of a setting and techniques that generate dialog and reflexivity (Ripamonti & Scaratti, 2012; Scaratti & Ivaldi, 2015; Ivaldi & Scaratti, 2015), they must also be willing to gradually surrender part of their power in order to give space to participants (Barbieri et al., 2010; Galuppo et al., 2011). This requires reflection on their responsibility and personal impact on the AR process, and a readiness to put some choices into perspective as the situation dictates.

Case B – Growing authors through at-home ethnography

Exploration of work practices, analysis, and actions were the three main tasks in which the participants of Case B were involved. The first task was intended to develop diagnostic capacities; the second allowed participants to refine their reflexive abilities; and the third enabled them to engage in the active authorship (Gorli et al., 2015) of new work practices and organizational arrangements.

Between one meeting and the next, participants were asked to work both individually and in groups on specific emerging tasks. Opportunities were provided for planning, reflecting, and reporting among members of the same group and with the rest of the staff. At the end of this phase, all groups were asked to formulate specific projects for implementation within their operational units. An overview of the process's phases is provided by Table 18.2.

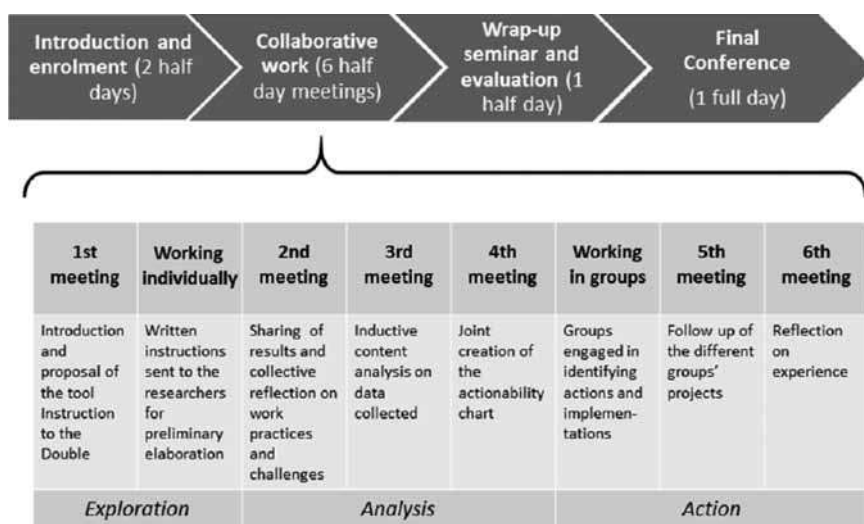
In the exploration phase, we used a tool that we called 'Writing Instructions to the Double'. Participants were asked to undertake the following 'assignment':

Imagine that you have to be substituted by a Double who will take your place in doing your job. Write instructions (things to be done and how to do them, suggestions, warnings, recommendations) that he or she should follow when going to work tomorrow morning in your place, so that: (a) he or she knows what to do from the beginning to the end of the day; (b) nobody suspects that a switch has been made between you and the Double.

The participants were free to write the texts (instructions) as they saw fit. The only requirement was that they should provide as many details as possible about the actions that the Double would have to perform throughout the entire working day. This tool, adopting the principles of at-home ethnography where the participants become researchers from within (by describing the cultural setting to which they have access and participate), engages them in an investigative process intended to deconstruct and uncover connections and meanings associated with everyday practices.

The narrative and writing dimension of the tool then allowed circulation and joint analysis of the data gathered within each group of participants. The 'one-another mirroring' among professionals yielded categories and key elements that were plotted on a large map and then discussed within the groups.

Each group was invited to express critical aspects and promising practices. They were

Table 18.2 Project flow and phases

then asked to highlight tractable issues using a scheme that linked the problems with their perceived causes. This tool provided a practical way to define the problematic issues, to position them, and to set priorities, thus initiating the action phase.

Between one meeting and another, the group was challenged to take an active role with respect to the issue or problem raised, and to report any results, critical situation, and comments in the next meeting. This reflection and action was close to the tradition of Action Learning (Revans, 1980), and it inspired a complex network of actions and processes that were closely and constantly monitored by the members of the steering committee.

THE THIRD TURNING POINT: CONCLUDING THE ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS

Wrapping up an AR process is a delicate step that raises two challenges: concluding the process while negotiating an agreement with the parties involved; and giving visibility and value to the results. The delicate nature of this final

stage is determined by the gradual definition of the question and the development of the objectives during the AR process, because outcomes must be monitored and the meaningfulness of the examined contexts must be maintained. We focus on distinguishing between the concept of 'result measurement' and the need to support a 'sense-making process', thus giving participants – and also the clients – the opportunity to position themselves and attribute relevance to what has been jointly constructed. This way of thinking about the conclusion implies that it is not necessarily possible to 'quantify' what has been done while still being able to evaluate the process by shedding light on the achievements and critical points from the standpoint of the protagonists.

In order to do this, certain issues must be considered, namely:

- how to reclaim the dimension of participation that includes all participants;
- how to make visible all the products of the work groups that were established during the process;
- how to highlight what has been modified in terms of the work process or in terms of new representation of the theme or the problem with respect to the initial stage;

- how to express the value of the outcomes in order to convey the practical and social importance of what has been accomplished;
- how to make outcomes/acquisitions circulate to the rest of the organization.

It is important, during the concluding phase, to highlight the dimension of expanded participation in the AR. It is possible that, during the process, micro groups form in relation to the work objectives, so that other intermediate dimensions are introduced alongside that of the general participation of all protagonists. In this case, during the concluding phase, it is important to draw all participants into discussion within a plenary setting in which what has been produced may be granted the maximum visibility, and in which exchange, comparison, and validation of the outcomes is made possible. The literature refers to meetings of larger groups where AR results are presented, discussed, and developed within the organization (Owen, 1983).

Particular attention must be paid to highlighting the results obtained, being modifications of shared participant representations of a problem, or modifications of the organization and its work practices. Related to this is the need to assess the results, and therefore to engage participants in identifying what is important and valuable. This step opens up the theme of power in AR. Attributing value means setting questions regarding the importance of what has been done. Being responsible for deciding that a process has had a positive outcome for the organization is a task that endorses the power of the individual who has undergone that process. Evaluation of organizational change processes and appreciation of the results are typically the prerogatives of the leaders. The challenge is to achieve the closest possible involvement of the participants in the evaluation process (Ivaldi et al., 2015) because this enhances their identification with the results while increasing the likelihood that the trajectories of development and change identified are, in fact, pursued even beyond the end of the research.

Case A – Setting up and circulating a new repertoire of managerial practices

At the end of the AR process, a final report was created and presented in a workshop in order to share the results with the other managers and with the rest of the Federation.

We devoted the last meetings with the AR participants to joint analysis and discussion of the material collected during the year. The reflexive writings were organized by the researchers on the basis of the recurrent thematic areas and the hot issues discussed. Then managers, with the help of researchers, classified and mapped the managerial actions described in the accounts. The maps enabled identification of the issues and problems around which new knowledge and change were generated. The overall opinion expressed in the discussion was that the Federation's new managers should perform their new role by exercising more discretion in dealing with the requirements of their organizational contexts, thus becoming activators of processes rather than experts on pedagogical or administrative contents. This appeared to be the strategy in which the managers finally decided to invest.

Discussions of this type led to the construction and validation of the new repertoire of practices, which the Advisory Board deemed sufficiently promising to circulate within the Federation. By virtue of the reflexive work on the writings, it was possible to move from individual and group learning toward an organizational level. In effect, the analysis and discussion of the overall corpus of writings enabled us to construct a research report containing first clues and indicators of a new management mandate and of a new set of practices, to be shared and discussed with the rest of the Federation in a workshop.

The final workshop was an opportunity for the Advisory Board and the AR participants to meet their colleagues and to discuss with them their hypotheses of renewal. The AR results were presented as 'open outcomes', to be discussed further and shared before

their implementation. The other managers recognized the outcomes as a valuable basis for changing their professional practice, and demonstrated their willingness to be trained for this purpose.

One manager said: 'If the new repertoire had been designed and proposed by the Board, it would have been different. I would have felt much more resistance and suspicion. Here I see the work of my colleagues. I can mirror myself in these results, and I trust my colleagues enough to understand that a change is necessary and worthwhile. I hope the Federation will engage all of us in learning how to develop our new role!'

Case B – Authors engaged in evaluating and spreading new practices

Also for case B, the final phase of the project helped the conclusion and evaluation of the AR process: the initiative was named 'Wrap-up seminar and evaluation'.

In this last phase of the process, the various participant groups were invited to share with colleagues and with the organization the results of their work, followed by discussing and testing possible future actions. The half-day meeting involved the AR participants, the other colleagues who had not participated in the process, researchers, and members of the steering committee. A specific section of this meeting was devoted to garnering feedback on the initiative from the participants.

In order to evaluate and close the AR process, participants (divided into the four groups/communities of practices illustrated above) decided to present some outcomes achieved throughout the process. One group narrated the process that accompanied new insights or new action plans defined for the future; two other groups prepared a presentation showing the pathway followed and the practices still ongoing; the last group presented a video. This video was made autonomously by the participants in order to evidence a revolutionary process that

happened during the AR: the nephrology and dialysis clinicians decided upon, and experimented with, new ways of communicating with one another.

The video was produced by the participants themselves, who not only designed and produced it, but also filmed it and took part as actors. The 'screenplay' was as follows:

The scene is divided into three parts. At the center is a patient lying on a bed in a dialysis and nephrology ward. A sign is shown saying: 'YESTERDAY'. The actors arrive: they are dressed in blue and represent the nephrology clinicians who have come to consider the patient's condition, read his clinical report, and take action by moving him and expressing their views on the correct course of treatment. Then they leave. Other actors arrive: they are dressed in white and represent the dialysis clinicians. They do the exact opposite of the previous group, moving the patient around again and suggesting other courses of treatment. They leave.

Another sign: 'TODAY'. The actors with blue shirts return: they find the patient in a position different from what they expected (they intuit the intrusion of the white-shirts), and they take action to restore their own configuration. They leave. The white-shirts arrive, and they also see the changes made by the blue-shirts, but they introduce other forms of treatment, with the result that the patient is moved and turned around on his bed in a way not at all beneficial to his well-being and recovery.

A third sign: 'TOMORROW'. The blue-shirts and the white-shirts arrive together. They all gather around the patient's bed and together they read the clinical report, discussing how to interpret the treatment. They act in concert; they leave; and the patient appears in a state of total harmony, properly laid out on the bed and smiling, bearing witness to a process of integration of treatments and disciplines which has functioned properly and harmoniously.

The video was immediately understood by everyone, transmitting the importance of sharing integrated communication practices and the value of real and applied multidisciplinary. The video is a program of action: once the actors have devised the script and enacted it, it becomes real life. It is no longer

possible to go back to one's post and abandon this way of communicating. The video thus carries a program of values and effective action, and may be easily communicated at every level within the organization, showing the capacity of the protagonists of AR to become interpreters of a scene and new scripts.

The emphasis the organization chose to give to the initiative was then extended not only to the hospital, but subsequently also to the network of healthcare facilities across the region by means of a one-day regional public conference with the participation of various stakeholders, from politicians and managers to the public and the press. The conference was titled 'Promoting and Developing Communities of Practice and Learning in Healthcare Organizations'. It was conceived as an opportunity to give wide visibility to the results of the innovative project. It was also an opportunity for politicians to publicize the training and research investments made by the regional administration, as well as its ongoing innovations.

Since the closure of an AR process hinges upon leaving a trace, valuing what happened and circulating it, and making it applicable to the rest of the organization, we can underscore the following challenges:

- To restore an active voice to the participants and promote autonomy and an independent interpretation of how the overall process is evaluated, with a view to defining areas of value and resource upon which to build future configurations. In this case, the power of authorship is entirely in the hands of the participants.
- To give space to collective and public events where those who were involved in the process can bear witness to the stages of its activation and the responsibility taken with their own (new) actions. This means speaking to the highest levels of the organization as much as to one's peers.
- To predict conditions and indications with a view to ensuring the continuity of the processes thus activated beyond the facilitation of researchers and consultants, by directing the focus onto the future path of the organization.

CONCLUSION

We can highlight how the distinctive features on which we have focused are entangled in the temporal steps and evolution of the AR process, allowing possible gradients and modulations of the AR approach and the connected epistemic perspectives (see Table 18.3).

We stress that the features described assume particular forms in relation to the different temporal steps of the AR path, due to internal and external constraints and the physiological turbulence, uncertainty, and unpredictability of the unfolding process. The concrete declination of such features in specific and contextualized situations (as in the two cases analyzed) allows the generation of appropriate knowledge actionable in order to enhance processes of change and expansive learning. The customary type of connection involving a kind of linear sequence comprising base paradigms, problems/objects of research, and the individuation of questions and knowledge-related objectives to be developed, following a logic in which reality becomes an area in which prevailing theories are applied, is penetrated and stimulated by the AR perspective. We acknowledge that the different AR approaches are not rigid and separated; rather, they are useful lenses and understandings to be adapted to different situations.

The organizational context, with its physiological changes and unpredictable articulations, generates the call for new knowledge beyond the replication of established and standardized knowledge that proves increasingly inert and unable to cope with the incredible increase in complexity of organizational and work-related situations at both macro and micro levels of society, culture, politics, and economics.

We acknowledge the need to break away from the logic of simply translating current theories to operative environments, and to accept the interaction with different kinds of knowledge-building processes that are close to action contexts.

Table 18.3 Synopsis of the AR distinctive features

	<i>Starting</i>	<i>Managing process</i>	<i>Going out</i>
Situativity	Use of sustainable tools Addressing implicit knowledge and practices in use (routine, habits, rules...)	Generating new knowledge and exploring possible solutions Listening to voices and languages	Monitoring of outcomes meaningfulness
Relationality	Gradual focalization through interaction and negotiation From initial needs to a shared problem definition	Collaboration and recursive path in data-gathering, sharing, and circulating Dialogue between different perspectives Small group work	Sense-making processes Expanded participation People inclusion
Transformativity	Mobilization of different resources (knowledge, people, time, space, budget)	Tackling new ways to acknowledge problems Social validation (steering group, collective events)	Circulation of acquired knowledge throughout the organization
Reflexivity	Activating conditions (advisory board, proper setting) in order to allow discussion, collective thinking, and regulation of the AR group's path	Promotion of reflexive practices Nurturing individual, social and institutional levels	Dialogue Plenary setting (visibility, artifacts, confrontation) Trajectories of further development

In AR, the production of knowledge is geared to the actors' responsibility for elaborating (rethinking the forms and sense of what they do), developing (seeking to imagine other, unprecedented modes of action), transforming (seeking to implement pre-figurations of change), and improving (verifying results of growth and effective innovation) their practice within organizational contexts.

The researcher thus becomes an actor insofar as he or she is called upon to both organize processes (multiple transactions that connect material and immaterial aspects, resources and ties, and relational, organizational, and political-institutional interests and dynamics) and to oversee the examination and production of data and information that are coherent and significant (as well as rigorous and reliable). The researcher operates by generating a field of methodologies able to guarantee the activation of provisional and realistic tools for a viable and sustainable production of knowledge and change in a situation.

The role of the researcher as actor (Scaratti & Zuffo, 2010) is close to that of a performer, for example in a jazz jam session

or *commedia dell'arte*, who does not follow a structured and repeatable script. The action researcher distances him/herself from a research practice based on objective and universally valid procedures; instead s/he is inspired by an idea of improvised research practices capable of adapting and responding to contextual elements as they arise.

From this perspective, studying organizations, taking action in them, and generating knowledge and change, means entering contexts of action characterized by uniqueness, ambiguity, unpredictability, and provisionality, and handling them with a practical knowledge deposited in implicit forms of knowledge and in the actions of the subjects. The challenge is therefore dealing with objects of inquiry that increasingly take on the form of research problems generated by urgent and highly unformalized situations, configured by social exchanges with stakeholders with varying degrees of expertise. Research objects, therefore, do not depend on the logical coherence of a project that connects them to a theoretical paradigm; rather, they emerge from the process of concrete construction that

links real issues and problems to knowledge needs that can be expendable and consensually recognized (Scaratti et al., 2010).

Several challenges are faced by researchers and participants in an AR process:

First, managing an AR process is a resource-consuming effort. There must be a strong mandate from the hosting organization and from the AR participants themselves, who must commit themselves to co-research by assuming the challenge of using relationality as a key mode of the process. In fact, the AR path requires a major investment by participants and significant willingness to experience new (collaborative) ways of generating knowledge, new relations, and highly emotional experiences with colleagues and researchers. This mandate should also formally acknowledge that co-researching requires availability and time. Researchers have the responsibility of carefully negotiating these aspects in order to guarantee the sustainability of the process.

Second, it is necessary to negotiate a clear and explicit agreement of mutual trust and confidentiality with those participating in the AR, and to return to this agreement periodically, if required. In this regard, the selection of situations to discuss in the group is important. Personal situations or issues of work overload are often inappropriate if they remain individual needs, since they pose a risk of manipulating the group for personal gain rather than using individual experiences to develop collective learning. It must therefore be agreed that the topics should relate to work-based interactions and shareable problems at a collective or system level, rather than individual concerns, which require other settings to be addressed.

Third, researchers themselves should be aware of and manage the power asymmetry between themselves and the participants (Galuppo et al., 2011). Researchers ought to take responsibility for the process by proposing and negotiating proper settings and tools, guaranteeing and legitimizing the expression of different voices and levels, promoting

connection and dialog among them, and recognizing and assuming the management of the different powers in play.

As a concluding remark we can highlight some issues raised by the cases analyzed:

- the researchers are required to enter into contact with the organizational actors, seeking in-depth understanding of the specific features of the organizational culture. This entails the use of specific tools in order to develop a process intended to foster engagement among the participants at the various levels in which they are situated (Cunliffe & Scaratti, 2017);
- a relational climate has to be warranted. The researchers must encourage reciprocal listening and select ways in which protagonists can present their views while activating a generative dialog with the researchers;
- it is important to ensure the process's sustainability by providing a work setting that is well balanced between stability and shifting, in order to scaffold the entire AR process (Scaratti et al., 2010).

REFERENCES

- Alby, F., & Zuccheromaglio, C. (2006) 'Afterwards we can understand what went wrong, but now let's fix it. How situated work practices shape group decision making', *Organization Studies*, 27(7): 943–66.
- Alvesson, M. (2009) 'At-home ethnography: Struggling with closeness and closure', in Ybema, S., Yanow, D., Wels, H., & Kamsteeg, F. (eds), *Organizational ethnography*. London: Sage, pp. 156–74.
- Argyris, C., & Schön, D. (1989) 'Participatory action research and action science compared', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 32(5): 612–23.
- Argyris, C., Putnam, R., & McLain Smith, D. (1985) *Action science*. New York: Jossey-Bass.
- Cassell, C., & Johnson, P. (2006) 'Action research: Explaining the diversity', *Human Relations*, 59(6): 783–814.
- Cook, S.D.N., & Brown, J.S. (1999) 'Bridging epistemologies: The generative dance between organizational knowledge and

- organizational knowing', *Organization Science*, 10(4): 381–400.
- Cunliffe, A.L. (2010) 'Why complicate a done deal? Bringing reflexivity into management research', in Cassell, C., & Lee, B. (eds), *Management research: Challenges and controversies*. London: Routledge, pp. 404–18.
- Cunliffe, A.L. (2011) 'Crafting qualitative research: Morgan and Smircich 30 years on', *Organizational Research Methods*, 14(4): 647–73.
- Cunliffe, A.L. (2013) 'Working within hyphen-spaces in ethnographic research', *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(3): 364–92.
- Cunliffe, A.L., & Scaratti, G. (2017) 'Embedding impact in engaged research: Developing socially useful knowledge through dialogical sensemaking', *British Journal of Management*, 28(1): 29–44.
- Elden, M., & Chisholm, R.F. (1993) 'Emerging varieties of action research: Introduction to the Special Issue', *Human Relations*, 46(2): 121–42.
- Engeström, Y. (1987) *Learning by expanding an activity-theoretical approach to developmental research*. Helsinki: Orienta-Konsultit.
- Galuppo, L., Gorli, M., & Ripamonti, S. (2011) 'Playing dissymmetry in action research: The role of power and differences in promoting participative knowledge and change', *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 24(2): 147–64.
- Gibbons, M., Limoges, C., Nowotny, H., Schwartzman, S., Scott, P., & Trow, M. (eds) (1994) *The new production of knowledge*. London: Sage.
- Gobo, G. (2008) *Doing ethnography*. London: Sage.
- Gorli, M., Nicolini, D., & Scaratti, G. (2015) 'Reflexivity in practice: Tools and conditions for developing organizational authorship', *Human Relations*, 68(8): 1347–75.
- Gorli, M., Ripamonti, S. C., & Galuppo, L. (2016) 'Change and Management of complex services: The ethno-narrative form to support good living and working together', *World Futures*, 72(5–6): 284–303.
- Heller, F. (2004) 'Action research and research action: A family of methods', in Cassell, C., & Symon, G. (eds), *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organisational research*. London: Sage, pp. 349–60.
- Ivaldi, S., & Scaratti, G. (2015) 'Competenze manageriali e costruzione sociale di conoscenza. Una ricerca sul campo', *Studi Organizzativi*, 2: 9–38.
- Ivaldi S., Scaratti, G., & Nuti, G. (2015) 'The practice of evaluation as evaluation of practices', *Evaluation*, 21(4): 497–512.
- Koch, T., Selim, P., & Kralik, D. (2002) 'Enhancing lives through the development of a community-based participatory action research program', *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 11(1): 109–17.
- Marshall, J. (2011) 'Images of changing practice through reflective action research', *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 24(2): 244–56.
- McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (2000) *Action research in organizations*. London: Routledge.
- Mezirow, J. (1991) *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Owen, H. (1983) *Open space technology. A user's guide*. Maryland: Abbott Publishing.
- Rasmussen, L.B. (2004) 'Action-research – Scandinavian experiences', *Artificial Intelligence & Society*, 18: 21–43.
- Reason, P., & Bradbury, H. (2001) *Handbook of action research*. London: Sage.
- Reason, P., & Bradbury, H. (2008) *The Sage handbook of action research: Participative inquiry and practice*. London: Sage.
- Revans, R. (1980) *Action learning: New techniques for management*. London: Blond and Briggs.
- Ripamonti, G., & Scaratti, G. (2012) 'Weak knowledge for strengthening competences: A practice-based approach in assessment management', *Management Learning*, 43(2, April): 183–97.
- Ripamonti, S., Gorli, M., & Scatolini, E. (2010) 'Setting, metodo e strumenti della ricerca-azione', in Kaneklin, C., Piccardo, C., & Scaratti, G. (eds), *La ricerca-azione: Cambiare per conoscere nei contesti organizzativi*. Milano: Cortina.
- Scaratti, G., & Ivaldi, S. (2015) 'Manager on the ground. A practice-based approach for developing management education: Lesson from complex and innovative organizations', *Applied Psychology Bulletin*, volume LXIII (272), pp. 42–57.

- Scaratti, G., & Zuffo, R. (2010) 'Ruolo del ricercatore tra impegno epistemico e consulenziale', in Kaneklin, C., Piccardo, C., & Scaratti, G. (a cura di), *La ricerca-azione. Cambiare per conoscere nei contesti organizzativi*. Milano: Cortina, pp. 197–226.
- Scaratti, G., D'Angelo, C., & Frascaroli, D. (2010) 'Contesti e conoscenza embedded', in Kaneklin, C., Piccardo, C., Scaratti, G. (a cura di), *La ricerca-azione. Cambiare per conoscere nei contesti organizzativi*. Milano: Cortina, pp. 95–126.
- Scaratti, G., Stoppini, L., & Zuccheromaglio, C. (2009) *Autori di ambienti organizzativi. Costruire le proprie pratiche lavorative*. Roma: Carocci.
- Schön, D. (1983) *The reflexive practitioner*. New York: Basic Books.
- Shotter, J. (1993) *Conversational realities: Constructing life through language*. London: Sage.
- Shotter, J. (2008) 'Dialogism and polyphony in organizing theorizing in organization studies: Action guiding anticipations and the contentious creation of novelty', *Organization Studies*, 29(4): 501–24.
- Shotter, J. (2010) 'Situated dialogic action research: Disclosing "beginnings" for innovative change in organizations', *Organizational Research Methods*, 13(2): 268–85.
- Susman, G.I., & Evered, R.D. (1978) 'An assessment of the scientific merits of action research', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 23(4): 582–603.
- Tagliaventi, M.R., & Mattarelli, E. (2006) 'The role of networks of practice, value sharing, and operational proximity in knowledge flows between professional groups', *Human Relations*, 59(3): 291–319.
- Thomson, D., & Hassenkamp, A.M. (2008) 'The social meaning and function of food rituals in healthcare practice: An ethnography', *Human Relations*, 61(12): 1775–802.
- Treleaven, N.L. (2001) 'The turn to action and the linguistic turn: Towards an integrated methodology', in Reason, P., & Bradbury, H. (eds), *Handbook of action research*. London: Sage, pp. 261–272.
- Tsoukas, H. (2005) *Complex knowledge: Studies in organizational epistemology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Van Marrewijk, A., Veenswijk, M., & Clegg, S. (2010) 'The organizing reflexivity in designed change: The ethnoventionist approach', *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 23(3): 212–29.
- Wenger, E. (1998) *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Researching Organizational Concepts Processually: The Case of Identity

Fernando F. Fachin and Ann Langley

INTRODUCTION

Process research implies considering phenomena as in motion, as unfolding over time, as becoming. Process researchers seek to understand and explain the world in terms of interlinked events, activity, temporality and flow (Langley et al., 2013) rather than in terms of variance and relationships among dependent and independent variables. While quantitative analysis may sometimes be mobilized for process research (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995), qualitative data seem much better adapted to this purpose (Langley, 1999). Thus, this chapter will focus, in particular, on how qualitative designs may be used to research organizational concepts processually.

To do this, we adopt a somewhat unusual angle, however. Previous writings have examined the general issues of designing process research (Langley, 2009; Pettigrew, 1990), collecting process-based qualitative data (Dawson, 1997), analyzing it (Jarzabkowski

et al., forthcoming) and theorizing from it (Feldman, 1995; Langley, 1999). The overall terrain already seems well explored. However, as Langley et al. (2013) noted, process research may be undertaken, building on different ontological assumptions. Thus, one can distinguish between process research that adopts a substantive ontology focusing on changes that happen to things which retain their identity as they change, and process research that builds on an explicit process ontology in which the world is seen to be composed only of processes (see also Van de Ven & Poole, 2005). Applied to the concept of organization, for example, a process ontology would tend to focus on the way in which events, activities and practices come to constitute and reconstitute organization (or organizing) in every moment, rather than focusing on *the* organization as a well-defined object, which might then be subject to change in the form of a discrete displacement (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). These two perspectives on organization could have different

consequences in terms of appropriate research designs. Our approach to considering methods for process studies in this chapter will therefore be contingent and focused on how different ontological assumptions about the processes associated with organizational concepts might lead to different kinds of methodologies and research designs.

We shall argue, in fact, in this chapter, that there are a number of different ways of operationalizing the notion of process in empirical research (not just two), and that each has its own methodological requirements. Moreover, in order to illustrate these contingencies, we will focus our analysis on a particular organizational concept that has given rise to an important body of empirical research, and which serves as an exemplar: that of organizational identity.

The notion of organizational identity was originally coined by Albert and Whetten (1985) as referring to ‘who we are as an organization’ and as encompassing those characteristics viewed by members as *central*, *distinctive* and *enduring*. Subsequent scholarship drawing on the notion of organizational identity began to question the last element (its ‘durability’), and argued that organizational identity can, does and must evolve adaptively over time (Gioia et al., 2000; Ravasi & Schultz, 2006). Gioia et al. (2013b), in fact, replaced the last characteristic of the Albert and Whetten triad by the label *continuous*, suggesting that organizational identities normally maintain some kind of continuity as they shift, often with labels staying the same but meanings changing over time. Thus, scholars of organizational identity began to see the concept in more processual terms. Authors discussed identity as ‘flow’ (Gioia & Patvardhan, 2012), and as under ‘construction’ (Pratt, 2012; Schultz et al., 2012). Some scholars began to introduce the notion of ‘organizational identity work’ (Clegg et al., 2007; Kreiner et al., 2015) to describe activities people and organizations engage in to establish or influence understandings of an organizational identity,

turning the concept further in the direction of fluidity and process-based thinking.

In fact, we chose the concept of organizational identity because we see it as representative of a range of organizational concepts that are often viewed in non-processual, static or ‘thing-like’ ways (e.g. identity as fixed – something that organizations ‘have’), but where processual understandings may offer novel and useful insights (e.g. identity as fluid – something that people ‘do’ or ‘work’ on). Other concepts relevant to organizations to which one might apply a similar type of thinking might include strategy, culture, structure, trust, power, leadership, etc., concepts that are quite abstract and intangible, but whose normal usage is in the form of a noun or as an object that can be described and qualified. Yet all these concepts have potential to be considered in processual terms as susceptible to change and transformation over time or as inherently constituted by activity or flow. The chapter aims to explore, using the example of organizational identity, some of the conceptual and methodological adjustments that need to occur when such abstract objects are placed in motion to different degrees and in different ways.

The notion of organizational identity also has another property that renders its analysis particularly interesting: it is one of several concepts (organizational learning is another example) that imply the transposition of a concept originally attached to individuals to an organization (Gioia et al., 2013b). Thus, not only does the notion of organizational identity raise issues of change and evolution, but also questions about aggregation and emergence that are themselves processual (How does organizational identity form? How do different individual conceptions of identity coalesce, interact, conflict or co-evolve?).

The chapter will be structured into four main sections corresponding to four different conceptions of process thinking: process as evolution, process as narrative, process as activity and process as ‘witness’ (for a

Table 19.1 Four conceptions of process thinking applied to organizational identity

	Process as <i>EVOLUTION</i>	Process as <i>NARRATIVE</i>	Process as <i>ACTIVITY</i>	Process as <i>WITNESS</i>
Focus	How an entity changes or develops over time	How people make sense within narrative accounts	How people negotiate understandings in situated interactions	How understandings are lived forward with research subjects
Research design and data	Longitudinal case studies with data from multiple sources	Texts or interviews incorporating narrative accounts	Naturally occurring observation of real-time interactions	Dialogic action research or auto-ethnography
Analysis	• Hierarchical coding into a unified temporal narrative • Temporal bracketing and visual mapping	• Theme analysis • Narrative analysis techniques (Boje, 2001; Czarniawska, 2004)	• Deep dive vignettes into interaction strips • Conversation analysis or other discursive methods	• Collective sense-making with research participants • Iterative temporally grounded analysis
Dilemmas and limitations	• Complexity of integrating data across space and time • Monological accounts that underplay divergence	• Need for consistency in narrative approach • Confined to understandings in individual texts (neglects interaction)	• Reaching beyond description • Snippets may generate decontextualized understanding (need for context)	• Processes increasingly hard to pin down because of ephemeral nature of observation • Fading potential for transferability
Illustrative studies relating to organizational identity	Corley & Gioia (2004); Dutton & Dukerich (1991); Howard-Grenville et al. (2013); Ravasi & Schultz (2006)	Brown & Humphreys (2006); Chreim (2005); Clegg et al. (2007); Humphreys & Brown (2002); Navis & Glynn (2011)	Drori et al. (2009); Fachin (2016); Fachin & Langley (2015); Karreman & Alvesson (2001); Ybema (2010)	Hatch, Schultz & Skov (2016); Other studies not on organizational identity: Kempster & Stewart (2010); Lorino et al. (2011)

summary of our analysis, see Table 19.1). The first three conceptions are quite well established (Langley & Tsoukas, 2010), and there is existing literature relevant to organizational identity associated with each, although this is more strongly developed for the first two. The fourth conception of process constitutes a more speculative development, inspired in part by Shotter (2006), that stretches the idea of process beyond existing work. We introduce this perspective to stimulate novel thinking about the implications of a strong process ontology for research methodology. For each perspective, we will describe the assumptions behind it, and illustrate the implications of this orientation for research design, data collection and analysis, drawing on the notion of organizational identity as an example. We also identify some dilemmas and limitations of each approach. We conclude with a brief discussion of the overall challenges of moving from more substantive ontologies toward more strongly process-based ontologies in conducting empirical research.

PROCESS AS EVOLUTION

The first perspective on studying concepts processually focuses on temporally evolving processes, but essentially adopts what we described above as a substantive ontology, seeking to better understand how and why an entity or organizational level construct might change or develop over time. Research will thus be longitudinal and focus on a period of time long enough for an observable shift to have occurred in the specific object of study.

In the case of organizational identity, referring to Albert and Whetten's (1985) definition, the researcher will therefore aim to examine periods of significant change or development in what is perceived to be central and distinctive about an organization, and to understand the events and processes underlying this transformation. A large body of empirical work on organizational identity

has in fact focused in one way or another on processes of change and emergence seen from this perspective (Clark et al., 2010; Corley & Gioia, 2004; Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Gioia et al., 2010; Hatch et al., 2015; Howard-Grenville et al., 2013; Ravasi & Schultz, 2006; Rindova et al., 2011).

Research Design, Data Collection and Analysis

Studies that focus on what we label *process as evolution* tend to adopt case study designs that rely on qualitative and longitudinal data, drawing on multiple sources to capture all the events that might be relevant to understanding the changes considered in one or more cases. This approach to studying organizational concepts processually is the most frequent and well-recognized manifestation of process research in the methodological literature (Langley, 1999, 2009; Pettigrew, 1990). All of the studies of organizational identity change mentioned above fit this pattern, and were carried out over a sufficient time period for recognizable shifts to occur in organization members' constructions of organizational identity. Although there is no logical reason why an evolutionary perspective on process might not involve more than one case – and indeed, many studies in areas other than organizational identity have done so (Denis et al., 2001; Jarzabkowski, 2008), all of the organizational identity-related studies mentioned above are also based on a single case study organization. This may in part be due to the richness and density of data needed to construct understanding of the emergence or evolution of organizational identity in any given case over time, as well as the complexities of effectively representing multiple case histories in depth within the confines of a journal article.

Data analysis in this kind of study essentially involves piecing together from multiple sources a unified temporal narrative that captures the events and processes studied,

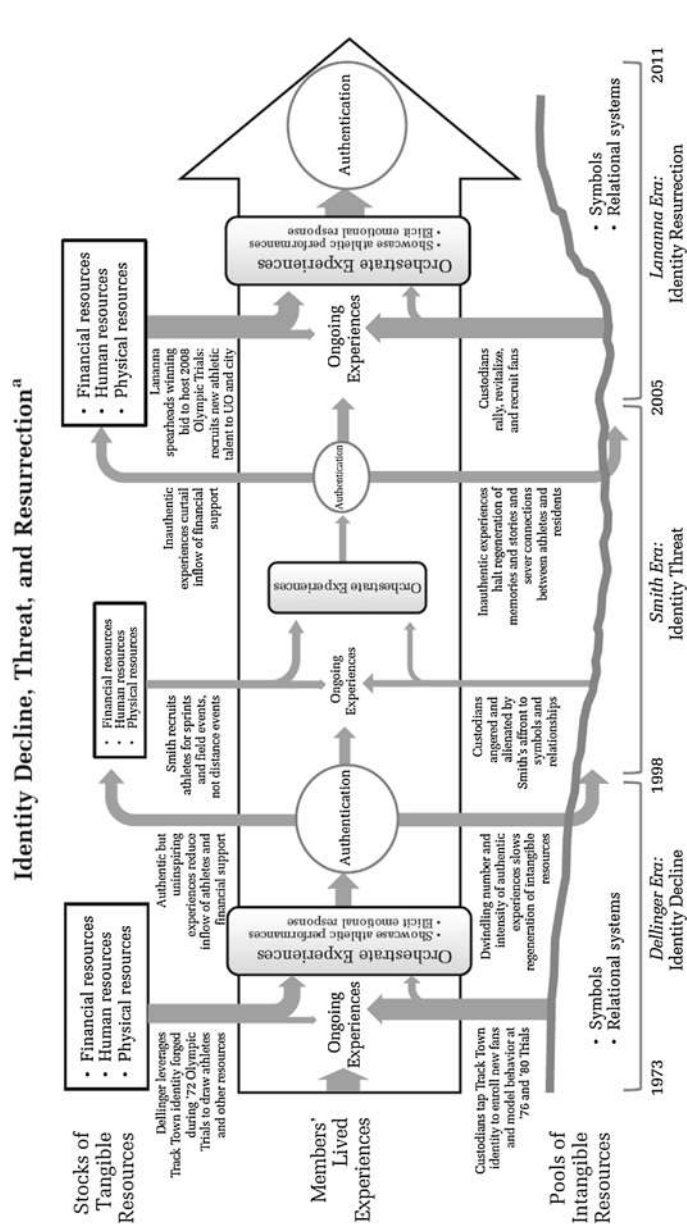
digging beneath them to identify more general theoretical ‘mechanisms’ that underlie this evolution. Studies of the emergence and evolution of organizational identity have in fact often used what has come to be known as the Gioia method (Gioia et al., 2013a) for operationalizing grounded theory-building. For example, in their study of identity ambiguity during a spin-off, Corley and Gioia’s (2004) 24-month study comprised 80 interviews, different types of documentation and non-participant observation. Through their analysis, the authors lead us through the hierarchical process of coding data according to this version of the grounded theory method. We see how verbatim quotes from different participants (e.g. ‘There is ambiguity as well in the sense of what is really going on?’) are successively grouped into first order codes (e.g. ‘Who are we going to be?’) and then into eight broader second-order themes (e.g. ‘Temporal identity discrepancies’) to be finally pulled together into three aggregate dimensions. Temporal linkages between the eight second-order codes grouped into aggregate dimensions are then identified, constituting a theoretical model. The method thus enables the movement from a huge quantity of temporally embedded raw data to a very parsimonious representation of the process of evolution from a pre-spinoff to a post-spinoff identity (for other examples of the use of this analytical method in the study of organizational identity, see Clark et al., 2010; Gioia et al., 2010; Gioia et al., 2013b).

Other analytical devices that are of particular value in studying ‘process as evolution’ are ‘temporal bracketing’ and ‘visual mapping’ techniques (Langley, 1999). Temporal bracketing involves decomposing timelines into segments that are used for comparative analysis. This can be useful to show how the process dynamics of change are replicated or repeated in different forms over time. For example, Ravasi and Schultz (2006) showed how the interaction between internal cultural factors and external images contributed to responses to identity threat during

two separate iterations of identity change at Bang and Olufsen. Visual mapping involves ‘drawing’ the data, that is, representing key elements of evolution over time (events and their interactions) schematically. Howard-Grenville et al. (2013) used temporal bracketing to analyse multiple iterations of attempts at identity resurrection in Eugene, Oregon, revealing the repeated interactive dynamics of resource mobilization and authentication. They used visual mapping to represent these iterative processes over time, both in abstract and in empirical forms. Figure 19.1 is taken from their paper and illustrates three empirical iterations of their final conceptual model, embedded in a visual map. The process of making a visual map will usually involve coding events, activities and choices chronologically, according to relevant categories, before creating visual displays. Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2013) provide a repertoire of methods for achieving this for qualitative research in general. Feldman (forthcoming) offers some more specific suggestions concerning visual displays that are compatible with process research more specifically.

Dilemmas and Limitations

Studies that consider ‘process as evolution’, especially at the organizational level, encounter the complexities of capturing, aggregating and interpreting organizational events that may evolve over long periods of time, and that may be spread out at different physical locations. For example, when attempting to understand ‘organizational identity’, the perspectives of multiple individuals (and not just top management) would seem to be potentially relevant. Indeed, Corley (2004) revealed how organizational identity constructions can differ for different hierarchical levels. To address the challenge of capturing processes that are happening across a large organization in many places at once, Balogun, Huff and Johnson (2003) suggested qualitative data



collection strategies such as the use of informant diaries and focus groups along with other more traditional kinds of data collection, avoiding the necessity for the researcher to be personally present everywhere. Methods such as video recording without actual researcher presence might also enable the capturing of processes at different levels and locations simultaneously.

However, the challenge then becomes one of analysis. Process data of this kind are 'big' and messy (Langley, 1999). As we showed, in practice, most authors who have drawn on these kinds of data (at least to analyse organizational identity evolution) have generally proceeded through a form of data reduction in which elements are compared and aggregated into abstract overarching categories. In this process, identity-related phenomena have generally been treated as based on *agreements* among members, discarding divergences or summarizing them in aggregate abstract concepts such as 'tensions'. Moreover, the temporality within the data has often been discretized into 'brackets' or periods. In other words, despite the richness, complexity and messiness of the original data, 'process as evolution' studies often appear to converge on unified process stories that show movement of a reified entity (the organization, organizational identity or other focal concept) between well-defined states. This is at the same time their strength and their weaknesses. They generate parsimonious process models of how and why key concepts evolve over time, and yet the potential fragility of the underlying concepts and the possibility for fragmentation of perspectives between people over time is underplayed in favour of the monological theoretical account that purports to fully capture and explain the essence of 'what happened' (Buchanan & Dawson, 2007). This leads us to another form of process analysis in which the focus is not on 'how and why things evolve', but on how participants themselves order events and storylines.

PROCESS AS NARRATIVE

The second perspective we discuss in this chapter focuses on the reconstruction of time and process through language, an approach that we label *process as narrative*. Studies in this genre seek to understand how people make sense of, and reconstruct their experiences from, a particular standpoint in time. Through narratives, people articulate events and make them meaningful. This involves a storyline or plot with beginning, middle and end, or a movement from past to present to future woven together in a meaningful sequence (Bruner, 1991; Polkinghorne, 1988). In other words, from this ontological perspective, the 'process' examined is not the substantive temporal evolution of entities in the real world, but a narrative temporality constructed and displayed within the accounts of respondents or in other textual materials. A particularity of this form of analysis is that: 'It permits consideration of the different possible meanings of organizational action' (Rhodes & Brown, 2005, p. 177), and indeed it aims to capture and understand the diversity of such meanings to enable theorizing. Process research that takes a narrative stance is thus likely to draw attention to multiplicity and fragmentation rather than integration as we saw with the previous perspective.

Narrative perspectives on process appear to be particularly well adapted to studies of organizational identity and there are multiple examples of this in the literature. In contrast to *process as evolution*, the focus is on how time (past, present and future) and the continuity of the organization is reconstructed through language by participants rather than by the researcher. Because language is assumed to *make* reality, organizational identity from this perspective is not assumed to exist 'outside' members' narratives. In these studies, identity both *in* organizations (Brown & Humphreys, 2006; Humphreys & Brown, 2002) and *of* organizations (Chreim, 2005; Clegg et al., 2007) has been the focus of attention.

Research Design, Data Collection and Analysis

Materials for the study of process as narrative can range from written texts, sometimes in the public domain such as annual reports or media texts, which serve as sources for understanding the discursive projections of organizations from which narratives can be derived (Chreim, 2005; Martens et al., 2007; Sillince & Brown, 2009). Alternatively, they often include in-depth interviews with organization members in which narratives are solicited in interaction with the researcher (Brown & Humphreys, 2006; Humphreys & Brown, 2002; Mantere, 2005, 2008; Vaara & Tienari, 2011). In the previously described perspective (*process as evolution*), it seemed important to obtain a wide variety of sources of data in order to achieve triangulation (i.e. validation of key happenings and understandings through confirmation from various sources), and it seemed important to undertake longitudinal analysis over long periods to be able to detect changes in the focal phenomenon. Neither of these requirements (source completeness and long-term observation) are as strong when a perspective on *process as narrative* is taken. Source completeness is less important because there is an acceptance that a narrative is just one viewpoint and that this has interest in itself. And long-term observation is less necessary because the temporality of interest lies as much or more within the interpretations and stories of participants rather than in the event sequences themselves. Nevertheless, narrative researchers may often wish to compare the stories of multiple respondents to identify their nuances and distinctions (Brown & Humphreys, 2006; Brown et al., 2005; Humphreys & Brown, 2002), or alternatively compare narratives from the same source at different points in time (Anteby & Molnár, 2012; Chreim, 2005).

For example, Chreim's (2005) study of identity narratives in a bank relied exclusively on the firm's messages to shareholders.

There was no implication here that the narratives derived from these sources captured all perspectives on organizational identity but, rather, that they simply represented a key top management perspective worthy of analysis. However, Chreim (2005) did compare identity constructions over time. She studied the bank's narratives over 20 years and was able to show how in these texts, top managers mobilized the history and future aspirations of the bank to project organizational identity in different ways over time, yet using a single label ('First Bank') that was interpreted initially to mean the 'oldest' bank and in later years as 'most innovative'.

In contrast, Brown and Humphreys' (2006, p. 231) study of the discursive exploration of space focuses on identifying 'plurivocal native interpretations of place and identity in ways that promote the reading of polysemy back into case research' (i.e. focusing on multiple narrative constructions of organizational identity from different individuals rather than drawing on a single 'official' source). Conducting 75 semi-structured interviews among members of a recently merged university, the authors trace different narrative understandings of organizational identity for three groups of workers and contrast them. The authors highlight the instability of identity constructions and how individuals with different values and stories draw on the physical workplace itself to provide contrasting narratives of organizational identity. This research as well as other work by Brown and colleagues (Brown & Humphreys, 2002; Brown et al., 2005; Humphreys & Brown, 2002) reveals the fragility and fragmentation of organizational identity constructions, suggesting that research that assumes unified perspectives may be missing important dynamics that underlie assumptions of consensus.

In terms of analysis techniques, the studies described above have mainly employed variants of theme analysis, laying claim to a hermeneutic approach (Heracleous & Barrett, 2001) that involves searching for

commonalities underlying the different narratives examined, and illustrating the meanings that emerge from them. This seems to be common among most of those who adopt this perspective. Nevertheless, a variety of techniques more closely associated with narrative as storytelling could also be mobilized to examine such materials. For example, Greimas' actantial schema (Greimas, 1987), which defines story in terms of a quest and identifies heroes, villains, helpers and bystanders, could be used to code texts in such a way as to better understand organizational identities and the narrative logic underlying varying positions on issues (Demers et al., 2003; Sørderberg, 2006). Other analytical schemes for considering narrative are suggested by Boje (2001) and Czarniawska (2004).

Dilemmas and Limitations

A perspective on process as narrative takes seriously the idea that temporality is continually reconstructed within the attempts by human beings to make sense of their world. The processes that are emphasized here lie first within individual narratives and secondarily across them, either between people or over time. These studies thus offer a different and valuable way of reconsidering process from that which we have described earlier.

Note, however, that there are various approaches to considering narrative that gives rise to a certain amount of confusion associated with the mobilization of this perspective, and this is one of the dilemmas in applying it. For example, Rantakari and Vaara (2016) identify four different perspectives on narrative: the first implies the use of narrative for 'representation' (referring to the narratives emerging from other kinds of research), the second implying a social constructivist view in which meaning-making is emphasized, the third referring to a postmodern view in which dominant narratives fragment and are deconstructed (as in the work of Brown and colleagues described above), and the last

referring to a perspective in which narratives may acquire agential properties, coming to construct the activities they describe. We see the last, for example, in what some scholars have called 'identity regulation' (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002), in which organizations attempt to develop future organizational identity or strategic narratives (Barry & Elmes, 1997) that become self-fulfilling prophecies by offering desirable subject positions to individuals, who then take these up (at least to some degree), conforming to the proposed meta-narrative. All these perspectives, and especially the last three, offer intriguing ways to consider process as narrative. And yet, they are rather different and may require careful positioning to ensure consistency of approach.

A second limitation of the narrative perspective on process is that it often seems bounded and confined by the particular texts (documents or interviews) that it analyses. It does not explain, for instance, how different understandings of the world might interact and influence each other over time. For example, the work by Brown and Humphreys (2006) described above is based on interviews and enables the description of different constructions of events in interaction with the researcher. We see multiple understandings of events and resistance to managerial narratives. However, this perspective stops short of showing how different constructions of organizational identity might intervene in live discussions among the various participants. The next perspective on process offers closer attention to this with its analysis of change and evolution in the moment.

PROCESS AS ACTIVITY

This perspective focuses on the construction of the world in everyday activity and interaction. This perspective is closer to adopting an ontologically processual view, capturing and building on real-time practices. Studies in

this vein seek to derive insights from a set of, often mundane, interactions occurring in meetings or on other occasions where activity and interaction take place. Recently published examples of studies that adopt this perspective include Spee and Jarzabkowski's (2011) study of interactions surrounding the creation of a strategic plan in successive meetings, and Thomas, Sargent and Hardy's (2011) study of dialogic interactions between managers and employees around a new strategic orientation. Studies such as these focus on micro-level interactions and the way in which specific discursive interventions may build on one another, and construct shared or divergent meanings. While studies treating *process as evolution* step back from the everyday to examine long-term change, and while studies of *process as narrative* look at individual constructions of process, studies of *process as activity* move toward capturing becoming in the moment and are therefore closer to conforming to a process metaphysics or ontology than the previous two (Langley et al., 2013).

In the field of organizational identity, relatively few authors have taken this perspective. However, there are some exceptions (Coupland & Brown, 2004; Drori et al., 2009; Fachin & Langley, 2015; Ybema, 2010). Moreover, there are a number of other studies that, without focusing on *organizational identity per se*, examine individual or collective identity-related activity in organizational contexts where social interactions among co-workers imply partly shared identity constructions and negotiations (Karreman & Alvesson, 2001; McInnes & Corlett, 2012; Wieland, 2010).

Indeed, critiquing the narrative perspective, Karreman and Alvesson (2001) describe narratives as 'fixed texts or frozen states of subjectivity' that are incapable of grasping identity as it happens during the organizing process. Thus, rather than referring to the notion of 'organizational identity' as a thing which emerges over time (process as evolution) or is constructed in narrative

(process as narrative), it seems more relevant here to speak of 'organizational identity work' as *activities accomplished by individuals and groups to form, repair, maintain, strengthen or in other ways influence understandings of the central, distinctive and enduring characteristics of a specific organization*, a definition constructed by building on Sveningsson and Alvesson's (2003, p. 1165) notion of individual identity work. This definition accounts for the fragile and temporary accomplishment of identity in a collective. With this, we also see that the lines between individual and organizational identity work in an organizational context are likely to become blurred, since the very same activities of individuals aimed at influencing organizational identity construction are likely to simultaneously draw on or promote discursive constructions that fit the individual's own internal sense of coherence and distinctiveness. We now consider the implications of this approach for research design, data collection and analysis as well as the particular dilemmas this raises.

Research Design, Data Collection and Analysis

While *process as evolution* builds on long-term longitudinal studies of multiple actors, and *process as narrative* focuses on specific individual or collective sources, a perspective that considers *process as activity* aims to get close to specific instances of interaction that reveal the phenomenon studied 'in the making'. Thus, such an approach tends to involve single case studies and fine-grained data collection opportunities involving naturally occurring interaction. This may typically mean observation of face-to-face meetings (Karreman & Alvesson, 2001; McInnes & Corlett, 2012), shadowing of everyday office contacts (Drori et al., 2009; Wieland, 2010), or the collection of emails (Fachin & Langley, 2015) or web communications (Coupland & Brown, 2004). In order

to acquire such data, ethnographic approaches seem most appropriate. In studies of process as activity, interviews may serve as complementary sources to better understand what is occurring in interaction. However, direct observation appears to be a critical and necessary source.

In terms of analysis, researchers who adopt a 'process as activity' perspective are likely to collect a much broader range of data than they can actually use in any specific research article. Because interactions need to be examined in fine-grained detail, analysis will likely involve 'deep dives' into the data to identify critical incidents or interactions that are particularly revealing of the processes examined. Rouleau (2005, p. 1419) offers an analogy with the natural scientist's 'microscope [that] helps understanding of the whole through its tiny parts' to describe how the detailed investigation of specific interactions can enable a cumulative and layered understanding of the whole. Typical analysis techniques may range from formal conversation analysis (Samra-Fredericks, 2003), to less normalized forms of interaction analysis and coding.

An interesting example of this approach comes from the first author's doctoral thesis (Fachin, 2016). Using the concept of 'organizational identity work', this study in a peer-to-peer network for open innovation explores individuals' utterances concerning that which is central, distinctive and enduring about the organization in everyday conversations (see also Fachin & Langley, 2015). While in interviews with the researcher, participants provided certain constructions about the organization; in everyday interactions their performances also shaped the framework of interpretation of other participants. The focus on naturally occurring and interactive data in this study, including collective emails, meetings and observations, enabled the understanding of how discursive spaces around organizational identity concerns are negotiated in interaction. For example, participants were able to gain agency

by selectively granting undesired constructions of 'who we are' provided by others, and subsequently benefiting from their reciprocity in the resolution of defining issues. Fachin (2016) further found empirically that when this exchange of reciprocities broke down, that is, when participants insisted on pursuing their own desired constructions of the organization, the organization split. The study illustrates the value of studying situated interactions over long periods of time to detect shifts in interaction patterns.

Studies of conversations during meetings have also been used to understand how *individuals* position their own and others' personal and social identities through identity work in the moment (McInnes & Corlett, 2012). There is room for further development of a 'process as activity' perspective on both organizational and individual identities and the way in which organizational and individual identity work (often expressed in talk or other forms of discourse) are in fact inextricably bound together, an insight that is easily missed using other perspectives.

These kinds of analyses are only made possible because the interactions between participants are directly observed. These studies thus capture the co-construction and negotiation of identity directly. In this way, besides considering the performance of organizational identity, they are able to highlight how shared understandings might emerge in the interaction of participants, or on the contrary, how organizational identity constructions in discourse might be continually contested or pasted over in interaction (Fachin, 2016; Fachin & Langley, 2015).

Dilemmas and Limitations

The *process as activity* perspective brings us closer to a true process ontology by focusing on activity. Thus drawing on this approach, rather than seeing how organizational identity as a fixed entity changes over time, we see organizational identity in the making,

never actually coalescing in any final form but as continually accomplished in every successive interaction sequence. This approach is not, however, without its own dilemmas and limitations. For example, because of its proximity to everyday interaction, studies that adopt this perspective may have difficulty in reaching beyond their description. The interactions examined can easily become their own explanation. The interpretation of events within a micro-incident needs to build on theoretical concepts that lie outside it, so that patterns can be identified.

Another limitation of the kind of analysis encouraged by this perspective is that interactions are ephemeral by their nature. Yet, they have longer-term origins and consequences than might initially be perceived and this needs to be captured in the research despite the focus on activity and ‘becoming’. Thus, the context surrounding the particular events (who are the particular people in the meeting? what is the history of their prior interaction? what does each really hope to achieve?) needs ideally to be understood and included in the analysis (De Cock & Sharp, 2007). And yet, this context is not necessarily directly visible within the interactions as they are observed. Thus, an analysis of processes occurring ‘in the moment’ may often require drawing on temporal and spatial elements beyond that specific moment in order to make sense of it (Denis et al., 2010). Indeed, studies that focus on interactional events as the central focus often need to draw as well on ethnographic contextual data, interviews and other sources to stabilize and enrich interpretations that would otherwise be focused on fleeting events detached from their surroundings (Samra-Fredericks, 2003). Bringing together these elements to derive an insightful understanding of happenings in the moment can be a significant challenge. Taking the notion of process to its logical conclusion, we suggest, however, that there is an even more challenging way to consider what happens when the world is set in motion.

PROCESS AS WITNESS

A final perspective that we elaborate on here, somewhat speculatively since it has rarely been implemented in empirical research, is inspired by Shotter’s (2006) notion of ‘witness thinking’, the idea that a true process perspective places the researcher him or herself in flux along with and in direct relation to the researched. In contrast to the way in which most research is conducted by looking back on and making sense of past events once they have congealed into facts and certainties, witness thinking recognizes that human experience necessarily involves ‘living forward’ (Weick, 1999) and that attempting to capture experience in synchrony with research subjects can offer a deeper and richer understanding of the world as a process of becoming, replete with unrealized and ever-shifting potentialities. As Weick (1999, p. 135) notes:

Unsettled, emergent, contingent living forward contrasts sharply with our backward oriented theoretical propositions that depict that living as settled, causally connected and coherent after the fact. The compact causal structures that epitomize our theories are artifacts of retrospect rather than narratives of prospect.

Similarly, the editors of the *Oxford Handbook of Process Philosophy and Organization Studies* (Helin et al., 2014) identify three elements composing an approach to engaging in process research that fully conforms to process philosophy as they see it: ‘belonging to and becoming with the world’ (close to Shotter’s notion of ‘witness’ and Weick’s reference to ‘living forward’), ‘particularity’ (focusing on specific examples to understand how they emerge and how they alter their context), and ‘performativity’ (a recognition that research itself contributes to and potentially changes the becoming of the world).

Actually doing research that does justice to these process philosophical aspirations is, however, far from a simple matter, and

indeed few scholars have attempted it, or at least published their efforts in academic journals. Below we describe two different angles for designing research that might approach a form of ‘withness’ thinking.

Research Design, Data Collection and Analysis

A first way of operationalizing ‘withness’ thinking in empirical research is suggested by Shotter himself (Shotter, 2006, 2010). He argues that withness can only be achieved through dialogic interaction between the researcher and the researched, in which conversations are used to question and explore the potentialities of the moment in order to change understandings of the possible and thus of future actions (Shotter, 2006). He thus promotes what he calls ‘situated dialogic action research’ (Shotter, 2010), whose purpose is to create socially useful knowledge specific to the practices of individuals whose situations are being studied. The researcher is not therefore involved in formalizing knowledge into abstract concepts and relations but, rather, in enabling the emergence of novel sensemaking that opens up possibilities. Such research is resolutely forward-looking and particularistic, rather far from the notions of research design and theorizing represented in the three previous conceptions of process research.

While Shotter’s (2006, 2010) own writings are resolutely philosophical and concrete examples of empirical studies are limited to snippets of interaction, a more complete exposition of an empirical approach that appears to conform to his philosophy is described by Lorino, Tricard and Clot (2011), who draw on Shotter as well as Bakhtinian (Bakhtin, 1981) notions of dialogue, and pragmatist notions of inquiry (Dewey, 1980[1938]; Peirce, 1958[1931]) to propose and illustrate what they call a ‘dialogical mediated inquiry’ method. The method (illustrated case on an issue of employee safety) involves an initial

step of researcher observation of practitioner situations generating mediating artefacts (descriptions, narratives, filmed incidents) that are then successively considered in dialogue first with those directly involved, then in a somewhat wider group (in which the filmed dialogues of previous interactions are displayed and discussed), and finally to a much broader dialogical community. The inquiry dialogues and material artefacts give rise to collective sensemaking and the generation of alternative ways of approaching the practical issues raised. ‘Withness thinking’ translates here into a form of collaborative action research.

Within scholarship on organizational identity more specifically, an interesting example that approaches ‘withness’ thinking is the study by Hatch, Schultz and Skov (2015) on organizational identity development at Carlsberg. Here, two researchers (Hatch and Schultz) joined forces with a manager involved directly in developing and communicating organizational identity projections for other members of the firm (Skov). The researchers describe themselves as adopting an ‘engaged scholarship’ (Van de Ven, 2007) approach. This manifested itself in an emphasis on dialogue with participants as events and the inquiry evolved (‘After each field visit we wrote and shared first drafts of our discoveries with Skov and other key informants, the reports ranging from 3 to 12 pages. In some cases this led to further discussions with the managers of one or another of the subsidiaries’ (Hatch et al., 2015, p. 64). This resulted ultimately in a much more collaborative form of inquiry than had been initially envisaged, reflecting some of the important features of ‘withness’ thinking:

The reactions of Group executives, Skov especially, helped us recognize the need to balance our academic interests in studying the OI/OC [organizational identity / organizational culture] relationship with their need to manage these phenomena and led us to new insights concerning how the empirical study of theoretically defined phenomena can be better related to practice.

Yet despite the adoption of a collaborative approach (which may well have provided distinctive benefits to the firm and its members), Hatch et al.'s (2015) key contribution is nevertheless expressed as a conceptual model derived from a grounded theory coding approach that conforms closely to what one would expect from a 'process as evolution' perspective. While 'withness' was no doubt inherent to the creation of the data, it is not deeply reflected in the research product itself, based as it is on a retrospective reconstruction of events and their inter-relationship by the research team once data collection was complete.

An alternative research design, data collection and analysis approach that would recognize that researchers are in flux (i.e. living forward) along with the research sites they are observing would involve better capturing researchers' ongoing sensemaking as it evolves in parallel with changes in the research site. This suggests stronger use of reflexive auto-ethnography as a research method – that is, the detailed recording and explicit representation in published research outputs of the researchers' interpretations of organizational identity issues in real time as they evolve, focusing both on the events and discourses observed as well as on the researcher him or herself as the observer and/or interpreter of these events.

Such a method would recognize that what a researcher understands of a phenomenon such as 'organizational identity' at a particular point in time is embedded in the moment at which that understanding occurs and is connected to that researcher's own identity and location in time and space. At a later point in time, not only will events have moved on, but the researcher's own life and personal identity may also have shifted, changing the way in which he or she is likely to make sense of the same events. As Cunliffe and Karunanayake (2013) point out, researchers speak for and construct identities, shaping the context, selecting some voices and silencing others. As time moves on, the researcher

him- or herself changes as he or she makes sense of the phenomenon. Throughout the process of analysis, the researcher is able to see 'new' things while being blinded by others. The phenomenon thus appears in flux through an interrelated process of discovery of the field *and* self-discovery (Locke, 2011). As Sergi and Hallin (2011) suggest, doing research can be viewed as a 'process' too, which may become inextricably intertwined with the processes observed and analysed, especially if these processes co-occur over long periods of time.

In this case, the main source of data for capturing not only organizational events in flux but also the flux of a researcher's sensemaking would be the researcher's own autoethnographic journal, and the analysis of this conducted by himself or by others at different points in time. Such work is rare, in particular in mainstream journals, and is likely to be somewhat experimental because of its foreignness to mainstream thinking about legitimate forms of theorizing. However, one example (related, however, more to individual rather than organizational identity in this case) is Kempster and Stewart's (2010) autoethnographic study on 'becoming a chief operating officer'. Here, the second author took detailed diary notes of his first three months in a senior leadership position. While the research data are constituted as a reflexive construction of an experience, the first author participated in the analysis of the second author's narrative, enabling the unveiling of elements taken for granted by the first author during the process itself. Such an approach could be adapted to the study of any phenomenon (including organizational identity) by offering insight from time-stamped diary entries and analyses into how researcher analyses evolved over time as the researcher moved from novice to insider within the same study.

In undertaking such research, there may be much to be said for generating records that are as close as possible to natural observations rather than being tied to time-bound and

indirect interpretations. For example, field notes taken during a meeting are one way to capture events. However, a video recording of that same meeting is more malleable and potentially subject to novel and richer interpretations when revisited later. The same phenomenon is seen differently because the ‘eyes’ of the researcher have moved on.

Though again not dealing directly with organizational identity, an example of an explicit attempt to capture this movement in researcher perspective over time is expressed in another study by Revsbaek and Tanggaard (2015). These authors propose that when researchers listen to audio-recordings of interviews some time later, there is value in rendering explicit (i.e. within the data analysis itself) the way in which the researcher’s understanding of and reaction to the material has evolved as a function of what was learned and remembered from the research site since the interview, as well as how the researcher’s own personal experience between the time of the interview and the present informs the interpretation. They label this process ‘analysing in the present’ and illustrate it based on case studies from research on newcomer socialization. Although they do not accomplish this in their paper, they also argue that there might be added value in including the research participants themselves in such an analysis process, an approach that would clearly bring the notion of ‘withness’ even more fully to life. This would be particularly interesting for a study of organizational identity issues, enabling participants to reflect on their own past interpretations of identity in light of a new present.

Dilemmas and Limitations

A perspective on process as ‘withness’ brings process research much closer to a strong process ontology, and has been explicitly favoured by writers strongly committed to the application of the precepts and assumptions of process philosophy to organization studies

(Helin et al., 2014; Lorino et al., 2011; Revsbæk & Tanggaard, 2015; Shoter, 2006, 2010). And yet, it is a perspective that rather deeply challenges our understanding of the nature and purpose of academic research on organizations, much more so indeed than the three previous perspectives. By taking process thinking to its logical conclusion, and by placing the researcher him- or herself in flux along with the situations he or she is studying, the research enterprise as we know it appears suddenly destabilized and detached from its moorings. While ‘withness’ thinking clearly has value for practice, the goal of generating conceptual understandings of phenomena that can be at least partially transferred to multiple situations appears to fade when adopting these ideas to the full. Weick (1999, p. 134) sums up the potential of this kind of perspective on process in terms of its potential to close the ‘gap between living forward with flawed foresight and understanding backward with equally flawed but mischievously seductive hindsight’. The trick, it seems to us, is to bring both closer together without losing either. As our examples suggest, this is easier (and more often) said than done.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we examined four types of ways of conducting qualitative process research based on different assumptions about the nature of process: process as evolution, process as narrative, process as activity and process as withness. We have highlighted how studies within these groups consider phenomena in motion with different lenses, assumptions and methods.

Indeed, contrary to what might have been thought, there is more than one way to operationalize the notion of process in qualitative research. The *process as evolution* perspective is the approach that is most commonly adopted and well accepted in academic

journals in the field. It involves treating concepts as entities and examining their evolution over (usually long periods of) time under the assumption that this evolution can be represented and explained holistically using a limited number of related concepts. The *process as narrative* perspective moves from considering temporal evolution in the 'real' world to considering its representation and understanding in the narratives generated by organization members. Such a perspective recognizes the multiplicity of meanings present in specific situations. The *process as activity* perspective, in contrast, focuses on becoming 'in the moment' as interactions among people generate and constitute observable transformations. Concepts or entities (such as organizational identity) are viewed here in terms of activities (organizational identity work) as people interact to influence their becoming. Finally, the *process as withness* perspective that we introduced in the last part of the chapter places the researcher in motion along with the research sites they are studying, refocusing the research enterprise in rather fundamental ways.

We note that, as we move from one perspective to another, the data required are still qualitative but may be somewhat different. Viewing process as evolution requires longitudinal qualitative data, preferably from multiple sources over a period long enough to observe clear changes in concepts studied. Viewing process as narrative in contrast may rely on synchronous data collected in interviews and texts. All that is required is that these sources embed respondents' reconstructed temporality. Viewing process as activity requires access to naturally occurring interactions and activities so that the micro-level shifts as interactions proceed can be observed in a fine-grained manner. Long-term data collection may be valuable but not absolutely essential in such cases. Finally, methods such as dialogic action research or auto-ethnographical diaries are sources more compatible with viewing process as withness.

As we move through the different approaches to process research, the nature of the research output changes also, as do the challenges associated with generating these outputs. As Langley (1999) commented, process data are always messy and making sense of them is never simple. Yet, there is now sufficient published work adopting the 'process as evolution' view that the challenge with this no longer seems insurmountable. Recently, the process as narrative and process as activity views have also been developing adherents and some strong and insightful exemplars have appeared in well-ranked journals, including some of those cited in this chapter. On the other hand, the closer we come to approaching a strong process ontology as put forward by process philosophers (and as represented by the *process as withness* view), the more difficult it seems to become to not only offer contributions that effectively capture the world in flight, but also in a way that is understandable, parsimonious and potentially transferable. The philosophers of process seem here to have reached somewhat beyond the understandings and capabilities of the pragmatic empiricists among us (speaking for ourselves). A perspective that considers *process as withness* places the researcher in motion along with the research sites they are studying, refocusing the research enterprise in rather fundamental ways. Herein, perhaps, lies the next frontier.

REFERENCES

- Albert, S., & Whetten, D. A. 1985. Organizational identity. In L. L. Cummings & M. M. Staw (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior*, Vol. 7. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 263–75.
- Alvesson, M., & Willmott, H. 2002. Identity regulation as organizational control: Producing the appropriate individual. *Journal of Management Studies*, 39(5): 619–44.

- Anteby, M., & Molnár, V. 2012. Collective memory meets organizational identity: Remembering to forget in a firm's rhetorical history. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(3): 515–40.
- Bakhtin, M. M. 1981. *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* (M. Holquist, Ed.; C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Balogun, J., Huff, A. S., & Johnson, P. 2003. Three responses to the methodological challenges of studying strategizing. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(1): 197–224.
- Barry, D., & Elmes, M. 1997. Strategy retold: Toward a narrative view of strategic discourse. *Academy of Management Review*, 22(2): 429–52.
- Boje, D. M. 2001. *Narrative methods for organizational & communication research*. London, UK: Sage.
- Brown, A. D., & Humphreys, M. 2002. Nostalgia and the narrativization of identity: A Turkish case study. *British Journal of Management*, 13(2): 141–59.
- Brown, A. D., & Humphreys, M. 2006. Organizational identity and place: A discursive exploration of hegemony and resistance. *Journal of Management Studies*, 43(2): 231–57.
- Brown, A. D., Humphreys, M., & Gurney, P. M. 2005. Narrative, identity and change: A case study of Laskarina Holidays. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 18(4): 312–26.
- Bruner, J. 1991. The narrative construction of reality. *Critical Inquiry*, 18(1): 1–21.
- Buchanan, D., & Dawson, P. 2007. Discourse and audience: Organizational change as multi-story process. *Journal of Management Studies*, 44(5): 669–86.
- Chreim, S. 2005. The continuity–change duality in narrative texts of organizational identity. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(3): 567–93.
- Clark, S. M., Gioia, D. A., Ketchen, D. J., & Thomas, J. B. 2010. Transitional identity as a facilitator of organizational identity change during a merger. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 55(3): 397–438.
- Clegg, S. R., Rhodes, C., & Kornberger, M. 2007. Desperately seeking legitimacy: Organizational identity and emerging industries. *Organization Studies*, 28(4): 495–513.
- Corley, K. G. 2004. Defined by our strategy or our culture? Hierarchical differences in perceptions of organizational identity and change. *Human Relations*, 57(9): 1145–77.
- Corley, K. G., & Gioia, D. A. 2004. Identity ambiguity and change in the wake of a corporate spin-off. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 49(2): 173–208.
- Coupland, C., & Brown, A. D. 2004. Constructing organizational identities on the web: A case study of royal dutch/shell. *Journal of Management Studies*, 41(8): 1325–47.
- Cunliffe, A. L., & Karunanayake, G. 2013. Working within hyphen-spaces in ethnographic research: Implications for research identities and practice. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(3): 364–92.
- Czarniawska, B. 2004. *Narratives in social science research*. London, UK: Sage.
- Dawson, P. 1997. In at the deep end: Conducting processual research on organisational change. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 13(4): 389–405.
- De Cock, C., & Sharp, R. J. 2007. Process theory and research: Exploring the dialectic tension. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 23(3): 233–50.
- Demers, C., Giroux, N., & Chreim, S. 2003. Merger and acquisition announcements as corporate wedding narratives. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 16(2): 223–42.
- Denis, J.-L., Lamothe, L., & Langley, A. 2001. The dynamics of collective leadership and strategic change in pluralistic organizations. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(4): 809–37.
- Denis, J.-L., Langley, A., & Rouleau, L. 2010. The practice of leadership in the messy world of organizations. *Leadership*, 6(1): 67–88.
- Dewey, J. 1980[1938]. *Logic: The theory of inquiry*. New York: Irvington Publishers.
- Drori, I., Honig, B., & Sheaffer, Z. 2009. The life cycle of an internet firm: Scripts, legitimacy, and identity. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 33(3): 715–38.
- Dutton, J. E., & Dukerich, J. M. 1991. Keeping an eye on the mirror: Image and identity in organizational adaptation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 34(3): 517–54.
- Fachin, F. F. 2016. *Organizational identity work in open innovation entrepreneurship*.

- Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. HEC Montréal, Montréal.
- Fachin, F. F., & Langley, A. 2015. Organizational identity work in an emerging peer-to-peer (P2P) network. *Academy of Management Best Paper Proceedings*, doi: 10.5465/AMBPP.2015.52 (published online).
- Feldman, M. S. 1995. *Strategies for interpreting qualitative data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Feldman, M. S. forthcoming. Making process visible: Beyond boxes and arrows. In A. Langley & H. Tsoukas (Eds.), *SAGE Handbook of process organization studies*. London: Sage.
- Gioia, D. A., & Patvardhan, S. 2012. Identity as process and flow. In M. Schultz, S. Maguire, A. Langley, & H. Tsoukas (Eds.), *Constructing identity in and around organizations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 50–62.
- Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. 2013a. Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research notes on the Gioia methodology. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(1): 15–31.
- Gioia, D. A., Patvardhan, S. D., Hamilton, A. L., & Corley, K. G. 2013b. Organizational identity formation and change. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 7(1): 123–93.
- Gioia, D. A., Price, K. N., Hamilton, A. L., & Thomas, J. B. 2010. Forging an identity: An insider-outsider study of processes involved in the formation of organizational identity. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 55(1): 1–46.
- Gioia, D. A., Schultz, M., & Corley, K. G. 2000. Organizational identity, image, and adaptive instability. *Academy of Management Review*, 25(1): 63–81.
- Greimas, A. J. 1987. Actants, actors, and figures. *On meaning: Selected writings in semi-otic theory*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 106–20.
- Hatch, M. J., Schultz, M., & Skov, A.-M. 2015. Organizational identity and culture in the context of managed change: Transformation in the Carlsberg Group, 2009–2013. *Academy of Management Discoveries*, 1(1): 56–87.
- Helin, J., Hernes, T., Hjorth, D., & Holt, R. 2014. Process is how process does. In J. Helin, T. Hernes, D. Hjorth, & R. Holt (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of process philosophy and organization studies*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1–16.
- Heracleous, L., & Barrett, M. 2001. Organizational change as discourse: Communicative actions and deep structures in the context of information technology implementation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(4): 755–78.
- Howard-Grenville, J., Metzger, M. L., & Meyer, A. D. 2013. Rekindling the flame: Processes of identity resurrection. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(1): 113–36.
- Humphreys, M., & Brown, A. D. 2002. Narratives of organizational identity and identification: A case study of hegemony and resistance. *Organization Studies*, 23(3): 421–47.
- Jarzabkowski, P. 2008. Shaping strategy as a structuration process. *Academy of Management Journal*, 51(4): 621–50.
- Jarzabkowski, P., Lê, J., & Spee, A. P. forthcoming. Taking a strong process approach to analyzing qualitative process data. In A. Langley & H. Tsoukas (Eds.), *Sage Handbook of process organization studies*. London: Sage.
- Karreman, D., & Alvesson, M. 2001. Making newsmakers: Conversational identity at work. *Organization Studies*, 22(1): 59–89.
- Kempster, S., & Stewart, J. 2010. Becoming a leader: A co-produced autoethnographic exploration of situated learning of leadership practice. *Management Learning*, 41(2): 205–19.
- Kreiner, G. E., Hollensbe, E., Sheep, M. L., Smith, B. R., & Kataria, N. 2015. Elasticity and the dialectic tensions of organizational identity: How can we hold together while we are pulling apart? *Academy of Management Journal*, 58(4): 981–1011.
- Langley, A. 1999. Strategies for theorizing from process data. *Academy of Management Review*, 24(4): 691–710.
- Langley, A. 2009. Studying processes in and around organizations. In D. Buchanan & A. Bryman (Eds.), *Sage handbook of organizational research methods*. London: Sage, 409–29.
- Langley, A., & Tsoukas, H. 2010. Introducing ‘perspectives on process organization studies’. In T. Hernes, S. Maitlis, A. Langley, & H. Tsoukas (Eds.), *Process, sensemaking, and*

- organizing. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1–27.
- Langley, A., Smallman, C., Tsoukas, H., & Van de Ven, A. H. 2013. Process studies of change in organization and management: Unveiling temporality, activity, and flow. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(1): 1–13.
- Locke, K. 2011. Field research practice in management and organization studies: Reclaiming its tradition of discovery. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 5(1): 613–52.
- Lorino, P., Tricard, B., & Clot, Y. 2011. Research methods for non-representational approaches to organizational complexity: The dialogical mediated inquiry. *Organization Studies*, 32(6): 769–801.
- Mantere, S. 2005. Strategic practices as enablers and disablers of championing activity. *Strategic Organization*, 3(2): 157–84.
- Mantere, S. 2008. Role expectations and middle manager strategic agency. *Journal of Management Studies*, 45(2): 294–316.
- Martens, M. L., Jennings, J. E., & Jennings, P. D. 2007. Do the stories they tell get them the money they need? The role of entrepreneurial narratives in resource acquisition. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(5): 1107–32.
- McInnes, P., & Corlett, S. 2012. Conversational identity work in everyday interaction. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 28(1): 27–38.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. 2013. *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Peirce, C. S. 1958 [1931]. *Collected papers*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Pettigrew, A. M. 1990. Longitudinal field research on change: Theory and practice. *Organization Science*, 1(3): 267–92.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. 1988. *Narrative knowing and the human sciences*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Pratt, M. 2012. Rethinking identity construction processes in organizations: Three questions to consider. In M. Schultz, S. Maguire, A. Langley, & H. Tsoukas (Eds.), *Constructing identity in and around organizations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 21–49.
- Rantakari, A., & Vaara, E. 2016. Narratives and processuality. In A. Langley & H. Tsoukas (Eds.), *Sage handbook of process organization studies*. London: Sage.
- Ravasi, D., & Schultz, M. 2006. Responding to organizational identity threats: Exploring the role of organizational culture. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49(3): 433–58.
- Revsbæk, L., & Tanggaard, L. 2015. Analyzing in the present. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 21(4): 376–87.
- Rhodes, C., & Brown, A. D. 2005. Narrative, organizations and research. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 7(3): 167–88.
- Rindova, V., Dalpiaz, E., & Ravasi, D. 2011. A cultural quest: A study of organizational use of new cultural resources in strategy formation. *Organization Science*, 22(2): 413–31.
- Rouleau, L. 2005. Micro-practices of strategic sensemaking and sensegiving: How middle managers interpret and sell change every day. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(7): 1413–41.
- Samra-Fredericks, D. 2003. Strategizing as lived experience and strategists' everyday efforts to shape strategic direction. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(1): 141–74.
- Schultz, M., Maguire, S., Langley, A., & Tsoukas, H. 2012. *Constructing identity in and around organizations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sergi, V., & Hallin, A. 2011. Thick performances, not just thick descriptions: The processual nature of doing qualitative research. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 6(2): 191–208.
- Shotter, J. 2006. Understanding process from within: An argument for 'withness'-thinking. *Organization Studies*, 27(4): 585–604.
- Shotter, J. 2010. Situated dialogic action research: Disclosing 'beginnings' for innovative change in organizations. *Organizational Research Methods*, 13(2): 268–85.
- Sillince, J. A., & Brown, A. D. 2009. Multiple organizational identities and legitimacy: The rhetoric of police websites. *Human Relations*, 62(12): 1829–56.
- Sønderberg, A.-M. 2006. Narrative interviewing and narrative analysis in a study of a cross-border merger. *Management International Review*, 46(4): 397–416.

- Spee, A. P., & Jarzabkowski, P. 2011. Strategic planning as communicative process. *Organization Studies*, 32(9): 1217–45.
- Sveningsson, S., & Alvesson, M. 2003. Managing managerial identities: Organizational fragmentation, discourse and identity struggle. *Human Relations*, 56(10): 1163–93.
- Thomas, R., Sargent, L. D., & Hardy, C. 2011. Managing organizational change: Negotiating meaning and power-resistance relations. *Organization Science*, 22(1): 22–41.
- Tsoukas, H., & Chia, R. 2002. On organizational becoming: Rethinking organizational change. *Organization Science*, 13(5): 567–82.
- Vaara, E., & Tienari, J. 2011. On the narrative construction of multinational corporations: An antenarrative analysis of legitimation and resistance in a cross-border merger. *Organization Science*, 22(2): 370–90.
- Van de Ven, A. H. 2007. *Engaged scholarship: A guide for organizational and social research: A guide for organizational and social research*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Van de Ven, A. H., & Poole, M. S. 1995. Explaining development and change in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(3): 510–40.
- Van de Ven, A. H., & Poole, M. S. 2005. Alternative approaches for studying organizational change. *Organization Studies*, 26(9): 1377–404.
- Weick, K. E. 1999. That's moving: Theories that matter. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 8(2): 134–42.
- Wieland, S. M. 2010. Ideal selves as resources for the situated practice of identity. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 24(4): 503–28.
- Ybema, S. 2010. Talk of change: Temporal contrasts and collective identities. *Organization Studies*, 31(4): 481–503.

Designing Strategy as Practice Research

Chahrazad Abdallah, Joëlle Basque
and Linda Rouleau

INTRODUCTION

Within the broader strategic management field, the strategy as practice (SAP) perspective is an approach that considers strategy not as something that an organization has, but rather as something that people do in organizations (Johnson et al., 2003, 2007). As such, it focuses on the concrete activities carried out by strategy practitioners, such as the way in which they mobilize the tools of practice or the skills and roles they adopt when engaging in strategic activity, whether they be formal leaders, middle managers, consultants, or professionals. From this perspective, strategy concerns individuals' actions at all levels of an organization, and as such is not viewed as a practice that is necessarily the exclusive domain of top managers.

The SAP perspective has been growing rapidly as empirical research has accumulated and activities around this approach have been institutionalized through special issues, books, and events in international

conferences. While the ontological and the epistemological nature of SAP has been written about extensively (Johnson et al., 2007; Vaara & Whittington, 2012; Golsorkhi et al., 2015), methodological challenges facing researchers to capture the essence of strategizing have not been sufficiently addressed. In 2003, Balogun, Huff, and Johnson opened the methodological conversation by suggesting that SAP researchers should innovate by developing flexible methods more appropriate for multinational organizations and by inviting researchers to engage with participants as long-term partners. According to these authors, interactive or focus groups, self-reports, and practitioner-led research methods were three suggestions for improving the way data is collected to better understand the set of practices through which managers and organizational members strategize. Their paper discusses four methodological conversations that have been, and still are, central in SAP: the place of ethnographic methods; the role of practitioners; the need

for innovative methods; and the challenge of connecting micro and macro levels of practice. The importance of these methodological conversations stands on the fact that they are at the core of how SAP researchers design or ‘do’ their research.

It is commonly agreed that researching ‘how managers and others do strategy or strategize’ is not an easy task and poses significant methodological and ethical challenges – but also opportunities – for researchers who choose to tackle it. Research designs, understood henceforth as the methodological *dispositif* that combines research strategies, units of analysis, data collection, and data analysis, are central for studying empirical strategy research because they enable the articulation of what we know about the phenomenon observed with the empirical and theoretical outcomes emerging from the research process. Put differently, SAP research should be able to rely on designs that would help capture a set of dimensions such as contextuality, agency, the nature of social practices, and the distributed and shifting nature of strategy. As these dimensions are fluid, complex, and socially embedded, designing a research project that will allow SAP researchers to grasp them presents multiple challenges and opportunities that need to be explored. This is what this chapter intends to do.

The chapter looks at how we do research strategy empirically and is organized in three sections as follows. In the first section, we describe what SAP research is about and discuss the challenges of researching strategy practices. In the second section, we explore the research designs of empirical SAP papers and discuss three research design profiles used by SAP researchers that we were able to identify from an extensive review of SAP literature. We label these research designs: Classical, Expanded, and Comprehensive. In the third and final section of the chapter, we address more directly the methodological conversations of the field and bring up some suggestions for advancing these conversations.

SECTION 1: SAP RESEARCH, METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES, AND CONVERSATIONS

The general framework used in strategy as practice for charting its territory is based on the conceptual triad of ‘praxis, practices and practitioners’ (Whittington, 2006; Jarzabkowski et al., 2007; Vaara & Whittington, 2012). In this framework, the term ‘practices’ refers to the behavioral, cognitive, and discursive resources practitioners use and the set of activities they draw on in strategy-making. By drawing upon these practices, the strategists or practitioners, in SAP terms, are contributing to negotiate and regulate the flux of activities (praxis) related to strategy shaping. Put differently, practices or ‘what people do’ in SAP research generally refer to the ‘shared routines’ or the set of ‘recognized forms of activities’ called ‘strategic’ in the organizational contexts studied (Phillips & Lawrence, 2012, p. 227).

Even though this framework provides consistency in the way SAP researchers define what practices are, there are different visions of practices that coexist in this body of knowledge. Rouleau (2013) identified five different underlying views of practice: as managerial action, as set of tools, as knowledge, as organizational resources, and as global discourse. Despite the fact that these visions convey a discourse that attempts to differentiate itself from the strategic management mainstream, most of these are still embedded in formal and rationalist strategic outcomes that are at the heart of SAP research (McCabe, 2010; Cunliffe, 2015). This is inconsistent with the fundamental nature of what ‘social practices’ are about since, according to practice-based studies, social practices are inherently contextual, performed by skillful actors involved in networks of activities regulated through diverse patterns of more or less integrated action. Therefore, to be able to capture how managers and organizational members accomplish their strategic work in practice, there is a need to draw on methods and data

that can capture empirically what social practices are about.

The issue of how to define, conceptualize, understand, and ultimately capture practice empirically is crucial in the development of strategy as practice as a field of study. Many challenges are to be taken into account when tackling the issue of how to choose the appropriate methodological approaches to study social practices of strategizing. Such challenges involve considering the material, discursive, performative, and contextual nature of social practices. A number of critiques have been addressed to the strategy-as-practice field in recent years for not adequately tackling issues of ideology, power, agency, or strategy outcomes in the study of strategy from a ‘practice lens’ (Corradi et al., 2010; McCabe, 2010). These critiques are worth examining as a source of relevant concerns for advancing SAP research design.

For McCabe (2010), strategy as practice, by relying on a conceptualization of power rooted in an epistemology of possession, focuses exceedingly on managers (top or middle), ignores inequality in the contexts through which strategy emerges, and consequently the reproduction of that inequality through strategy, and adopts a strong managerial agenda that limits its understanding of social practices. Methodologically, this critique addresses a strong preoccupation within the strategy as practice field with the practices of certain actors, that is, top and middle managers in the organization, and calls for broadening the research to a wider array of social actors involved in the strategy process. Recently, Balogun, Best, and Lê (2015) have offered a response to this critique by showing how frontline workers in a museum are involved in strategy work by embodying and ‘bringing into being’ the organization’s strategy.

A closer examination of agency is also critical for strategy as practice research. Phillips and Lawrence (2012) suggest a ‘humbler, more nuanced’ conception of

agency and a reconsideration of the role of actors in the social construction of strategy work. They point to a general shift toward the study of actors, but again insist on a humbler reconsideration of their agency and a closer examination of its limits. Agency is prevalently considered as too purposeful as researchers often focus on the intentional and very competent side of practices. The concept of ‘practice’ is also an object of debate and its definition within the strategy as practice community somewhat contested. Strategy as practice, according to Corradi, Gherardi, and Verzelloni (2010), considers ‘practice’ as an empirical object, therefore maintaining a strong focus on activities and purposeful agency and neglecting the unintended consequences of situatedness. In recent years, however, strategy as practice research has moved away from the ‘omnipotent’ strategist to a more inclusive understanding of strategy work as a site for the interplay of the social, the material, and the discursive, yet research needs to address more strongly the contingent, embedded, and situated nature of agency in strategy work.

Before we discuss how strategy as practice researchers have addressed these challenges and critiques over the years, we will introduce four extensively debated methodological conversations that are associated with these challenges.

Current SAP Methodological Conversations

In recent years, four methodological conversations were, and still are, central to SAP research. The first conversation revolves around strengths and weaknesses of ethnographic methods in SAP research; the second around the role of practitioners in SAP research; the third is about the need for innovative methods in SAP research; and the fourth addresses the challenge of connecting the micro- to the macro-level of practices.

Methodological Conversation 1: SAP and Ethnographic Methods

One of the most prevalent methodological conversations that has pervaded the field over the years concerns the pros and cons of using ethnographic and longitudinal case studies in SAP research. Given that SAP researchers are looking at practices, these methods seem to be ideal at first glance for being able to understand ‘what people do’ when they are strategizing. Nevertheless, during the period in which SAP research constituted itself as a research field (2002–2008 according to Dittrich et al., 2015), there was a movement in favor of taking some distance from ethnographic or longitudinal case studies (Balogun et al., 2003; Huff et al., 2010; Venkateswaran & Prabhu, 2011). Balogun et al. (2003) started this movement by arguing that these approaches are greatly time-consuming and do not allow the researcher to embrace the scope and speed of organizational complexity. Later, Huff et al. (2010) claimed that ethnographic and case study methods were not sufficient for understanding strategizing and that there was a need to expand evidences from methods that support more generalizable conclusions and enhance the scope and the robustness of strategy as practice research. Such a position was later reinforced by Venkateswaran and Prabhu (2011), who invited SAP researchers to use quantification or clinical methods to enhance the rigor and relevance of this body of research.

However, in the period where SAP research developed and grew – between 2009 and 2014 according to Dittrich et al. (2015) – a counter-discourse suggesting that ethnographic methods constitute the most powerful methods for investigating strategy practices strongly emerged (Chia & Rasche, 2010; Rouleau, 2013; Vesa & Vaara, 2014; Cunliffe, 2015). According to Vesa and Vaara (2014), the potential of ethnographic studies has yet to be realized in this research domain. In her investigation of SAP research, Cunliffe (2015) also confirms this diagnostic, saying

that research in this area is based on an objectivist focus that would need to be overcome to be able to capture strategizing as a lived and reflexive experience.

Methodological Conversation 2: The Role of Practitioners

Another important methodological conversation concerns the relations between researchers and practitioners in SAP research. In their seminal methodological paper, Balogun et al. (2003) urge strategy as practice researchers to engage in collaborative research with managers. Assuming that SAP is interested in ‘practices, praxis, and practitioners’, it stands to reason that SAP researchers should redefine their relations with the practitioners they are observing. Despite numerous voices in favor of that inclusion, to date very few SAP researchers have designed their research on a collaborative mode with managers (Beech & Johnson, 2005; Heracleous & Jacob, 2008; Eppler & Platts, 2009; Mueller et al., 2013). To build a partnership with practitioners would require researchers to enter a more dialogic and reflexive relation (Cunliffe, 2011) with them, which, in turn, most certainly would affect the determination and definition of the unit of analysis as well as the nature of the ‘sample’ studied.

Methodological Conversation 3: The Need for Innovative Approaches

The call for innovative methodologies has also been the object of a methodological conversation that paralleled the emergence and development of SAP research. On the one hand, Vaara and Whittington (2012, p. 291), in their extensive review of SAP research, contend that this body of work ‘has achieved a substantial methodological shift’ in introducing in strategic management a diversity of in-depth qualitative methods and data. But on the other

hand, most observers of the SAP field will agree on the overuse of case studies and interviews, thus leaving the impression that the level of methodological innovation is lower than we can think at first glance (Johnson et al., 2007; Venkateswaran & Prabhu, 2011; Vesa & Vaara, 2014). Recently, however, Golsorkhi et al. (2015, p. 14) have taken a position on this debate in the following terms: ‘the call for “methodologically innovative” approaches does not necessarily mean that one has to develop entirely new methodologies: it suggests, rather that we look at them through a “practice lens” and use innovative ways to approach managers and reconstruct their strategizing activities and roles’.

Methodological Conversation 4: Connecting Micro and Macro Levels

Over the years, SAP research has been addressing the need to connect the mundane activities involved in strategizing at the micro level with the macro organizational and even sectorial or institutional levels (Whittington, 2006; Johnson et al., 2007; Jarzabkowski et al., 2015). When looking for the in-vivo experience of doing strategy, the risk of not being able to see the forest for the trees is big. Even though the opposite is also true, there are regular attempts in the literature that come back on the need to explore more macro-strategizing issues (Huff et al., 2010; Vaara & Durand, 2012; Jarzabkowski et al., 2015). For example, Huff et al. (2010) argue for the need to expand the strategizing agenda toward a broader comprehension of macro-events. Vaara and Durand (2012) enrich the argument by inviting strategic management researchers, whomever they are (mainstream or not), to take up seriously the grand challenges that are of global relevance. Nevertheless, some authors have suggested relevant integrative frameworks in order to help researchers to deal with this methodological issue. In 2006, Whittington has proposed a framework for

integrating the intra- and extra-organizational levels. More recently, Jarzabkowski et al. (2015) have reinitiated the debate by offering an integrative perspective on the links between strategy and performance in order to develop more context-sensitive theories about strategic practices and their outcomes at the organizational level.

Prior to further addressing the methodological challenges and conversations that SAP researchers face, we will examine how SAP research has been designed and carried out so far.

SECTION 2: EXPLORING SAP RESEARCH DESIGNS

Following Cunliffe (2011), we understand research designs to consist in an interrelated set of elements that form the methodological *dispositif* around which a study is articulated. To assess how SAP researchers ‘do’, or more precisely ‘design’ their research, we proceeded in three steps.

First step: Identifying SAP empirical papers. To construct the data set on which we assess the way SAP researchers design their empirical studies, we drew on the recent recension of SAP works done by Dittrich et al. (2015), who analyzed how SAP researchers construct their contributions. From 2002 to 2014, they identified ‘seventy empirical papers that drew upon or sought to contribute to SAP research’ (Dittrich et al., 2015, p. 96). We completed this data set by including five SAP papers published during 2015. In total, 75 SAP empirical papers were identified.¹

Second step: Building a matrix. To analyze the set of papers identified, we constructed a matrix based on the fundamental requirements of an empirical paper’s methodology section. While all the SAP empirical studies to be analyzed were listed on the vertical axis of the matrix, we used the categories proposed by Johnson et al. (2007, p. 53)

to define its horizontal axis. According to them, an ‘archetypal research sequence’ can take the following steps: Approaching Strategy as Practice; Bounding Strategy as Practice; Capturing Strategy as Practice; and Theorizing Strategy as Practice. In our view, these steps also constitute the main parts that are generally found in the methodological section of an empirical SAP paper. For the purpose of this chapter, we adapted the framing of these powerful labels in order to be able to capture the What (research strategies), the Who (unit of analysis), the How (data collection), and the Why (data analysis) of the *dispositif* or method procedures generally described in the empirical SAP papers. We will now describe the content of each of these dimensions.

1 Approaching Strategy as Practice: Research strategies (What)

The first section of an empirical paper generally indicates the research positioning or the main epistemological choices adopted by the researcher. Here SAP researchers who use qualitative data generally announce their research orientation and strategies. For example, researchers might say that they are doing longitudinal or comparative case studies based either on interpretive, process, or language orientation and so on. Naturally, such choices and orientations should be coherent with the research question and other parts of the research design. After having specified these choices, it is common to justify the empirical context of the research and/or the case study chosen. Sometimes, researchers also explain how the research has unfolded over time and if they have taken a more or less inductive research pathway.

2 Bounding Strategy as Practice: Unit of analysis (Who)

The second dimension of a research design concerns the unit of analysis and, by corollary, the choice of the studied ‘sample’. This is a tricky point for SAP researchers, who are supposed to look at ‘practices’. But as we have previously seen, the definitions of strategy practices are multiple and can be very wide in the sense that for some SAP researchers everything can be strategic (e.g. Rouleau, 2005). This ambiguity about what practices are and are not renders the task

of identifying what the appropriate unit of analysis is (workshops, middle managers, strategic episodes, strategic plans, strategic decisions, and so on) particularly sensitive. Venkateswaran and Prabhu (2011) consider that the definition of the unit analysis is one of the major methodological issues for SAP research. To identify the adequate unit of analysis is imperative because it allows for defining or bounding the nature of the corresponding ‘sample’ to be studied. As will be shown in our analysis, there is a tendency in SAP research to map individual or organizational activities without always being clear on these questions.

3 Capturing Strategy as Practice: Data collection (How)

The third section of the research design has to do with the need to access the data and to obtain them. This section describes how data regarding ‘what managers and others do when strategizing’ were obtained. Put differently, research designs in this part describe what the researchers’ data sources and collecting tools were. As most SAP empirical papers are qualitative, they tend to draw on multiple and classical data collection tools ranging from interviews, observations, and documents.

4 Theorizing Strategy as Practice: Data analysis (Why)

The last section of a research design or an empirical paper is generally devoted to the description of how the data were analyzed in order to explain why practitioners did what was observed during the research. The main challenge of this part of the research design concerns the capacity of SAP researchers to show how they connect in-depth and local data to strategic outcomes and/or to findings that will have some generalizable or transferable properties. The issue concerns the capacity of SAP researchers to go over descriptive knowledge and achieve a certain level of theorizing and/or understanding about how managers and others strategize. It is generally through the back-and-forth process between empirical data and theory that SAP researchers are able to propose relevant contributions for advancing our knowledge of strategy as a social practice.

Third step: Distinguishing three profiles of SAP research designs. After completing the matrix, we were able to identify, decorticate, and compare the research procedures

generally accomplished by SAP researchers. This third step of our analysis led us to distinguish three research design profiles used in SAP research, namely: the Classical, the Extended, and the Comprehensive SAP research designs (see Table 20.1). The following section describes these profiles according to the criteria we used to examine SAP empirical research. This review of the state of SAP research designs will allow us, in the third part of this chapter, to position ourselves within these debates and suggest future avenues.

The Classical SAP Research Design

What we have labeled the Classical SAP research design is the closest to mainstream strategy research traditions, such as the study of strategy process, focusing on managerial strategic actions and on decision-making processes and behaviors that influence organizational performance (Vaara & Whittington, 2012). The Classical SAP research design generally offers an objectivist view of strategy in which a unique reality can be accessed through the accounts of top managers (Johnson et al., 2007). Such research designs still aim at offering reproducible and generalizable results. Typically, therefore, the Classical SAP research design implies a conception of strategy as being made of activities and behavioral patterns that can be systematically described and represented in a theoretical model. These activities can be conceived as enablers or constraints of strategic success (Angwin et al., 2009) and are often accompanied by process descriptions showing explanations in terms of causal relations (Johnson et al., 2010). Moreover, the classical research design almost always includes comparisons across multiple cases, providing possibilities for variance explanations, as well as enhanced validation of findings (Mantere, 2005). Some studies also have a longitudinal aspect that provides possibilities for comparing the evolution of strategy

processes over time (Jarzabkowski, 2003; Fumasoli et al., 2015).

Researchers using a Classical SAP research design focus on patterns of micro-strategies, firm resources, and competencies (Salvato, 2003), as well as the concepts and tools these firms use (Mantere, 2005; Paroutis & Pettigrew, 2007). They also pay attention to the role, activities, and capabilities of existing senior executives tasked with strategy and whether they help organizations become more effective (Jarzabkowski 2003; Angwin et al., 2009). More recently, studies have explored the use of identity as a risk-reducing device in strategic plans (Fumasoli et al., 2015). Here, there is a marked interest for traditional strategy actors, activities, and tools, even if the aim is to embrace a practice approach. Mantere (2005) explicitly refers to formal practices as the favored unit of analysis in strategy research when he writes: ‘Whittington (2003) has suggested that current strategy as practice research would benefit most by concentrating on the formal practices of strategy because they are more easily traceable empirically, and because strategy practitioners widely practice these formal aspects, of which little is known’ (Mantere, 2005, p. 161). Yet Mantere also acknowledges that the choice to concentrate on formal aspects of strategy practices restrains the possibilities of his research to trace emergent aspects of the phenomenon.

Regarding data collection, or the How dimension, the Classical SAP research design strongly relies on structured or semi-structured interviews of managers and strategists as a primary source of data (as in Mantere & Vaara, 2008). The underlying assumption justifying the use of interviews seems to be that *a posteriori* reports on what has taken place is a satisfying means to studying practices. The following quotation from Paroutis and Pettigrew (2007) is explicit regarding this point: ‘An ethnographic approach might have provided more detailed accounts of the actual activities used by strategy teams. However, this article is based on

Table 20.1 Three profiles of strategy as practice research design

	<i>Classical</i>	<i>Expanded</i>	<i>Comprehensive</i>
Approaching SAP: Research strategies (What)	Strategy as made of activities and behavioral patterns that can be described and shown in a model Predict success. Variance, causal explanations Brief description of context Comparative, multiple and single-case studies Often longitudinal	Strategy as a concrete process, involving change episodes that trigger sense-making and cognition. Discourse and interactions treated as objects Detailed description of context Multiple and single-case studies. Process and discursive studies	Strategy as a social reality and/or embodied performance carried out by discourse and dynamics that must be studied at the level of micro-practices Detailed description of context Embedded, multiple, and single-case studies. Combination of approaches (e.g. critical, material, multi-modality, ethnomethodology, conversation analysis)
Bounding SAP: Unit of analysis (Who)	Top management teams, middle-managers, behavioral patterns, strategic tools, formal strategy and strategists' roles Informants	Middle-managers' competencies, individual and collective sense-making, decision-making episodes, epistemic culture around strategy tools, cultural meanings Participants	Discursive interactions, material aspects of strategizing, relations with space, talk-in-interaction, tacit competencies, emotions Partners
Capturing SAP: Data collection (How)	Interviews (primary source) Documents, observations, and other data (secondary source)	Semi and non-participant observations of meetings, often coupled with interviews (primary source) Workshops, focus groups and documents (secondary sources)	Ethnographic observations (often including audio and video-recording or shadowing), workshops and training, meetings, collaborative research (primary source) Interviews, documents, and archival data (secondary source)
Theorizing SAP: Data analysis (Why)	Grounded theory analysis and categorizing of data according to pre-existing theories Elaboration of theoretical models Salvato (2003); Balogun & Johnson (2005); Mantere (2005); Paroutis & Pettigrew (2007); Angwin et al. (2009); Johnson et al. (2010); Fumasoli et al. (2015)	Grounded theory analysis Reconstruction of events in chronological order Theory-data iterative loops Maitlis & Lawrence (2003); Beech & Johnson (2005); Kaplan (2008); Moisander & Stenfors (2009); Fauré & Rouleau (2011); Rouleau & Balogun (2011); Abdallah & Langley (2014)	Micro analysis Successive phases of coding, scaling up from micro-practices to strategy processes Rouleau (2005); Samra-Frederiks (2005); Nayak (2008); Kaplan (2011); Aggerholm et al. (2012); Jarzabkowski et al. (2013); Balogun et al. (2015)
Examples			

the assumption that practitioners are able to express in retrospect their activities' (p. 107). The people with whom these interviews are carried out are explicitly (or implicitly) seen as informants. Often these interviews will be completed by archival documents pertaining to the context and/or the strategy process as a secondary source of data (see, for instance, Jarzabkowski & Balogun, 2009). Sometimes observations and other data sources are added to the data set (see Jarzabkowski, 2008). This extract from Mantere (2005) demonstrates it: 'The semi-structured interview outline that we created remained stable through the 301 interviews. The same outline was used in all 12 organizations' (p. 160). In this case, the stability of the interview outline across cases and across researchers was aimed at increasing possibilities of cross-examination and comparison, as well as variance calculation.

Finally, regarding data analysis, the Classical SAP research design will normally be 'combining both inductive and deductive approaches' (Jarratt & Stiles, 2010, p. 32), and will rely on grounded-theory and other similar analytic methods (Salvato, 2003; Nordqvist & Melin, 2008). By that we mean analysis phases including iterative back and forth loops between data and theory, often involving categorization and coding of data according both to emerging activity patterns and preexisting theories. In the Classical design we also observe a tendency to the elaboration of theoretical models that describe but also predict strategy processes and dynamics according to strategists' activities and behavioral patterns.

The Expanded SAP Research Design

The Expanded SAP research design also involves the studying of strategy as an objective reality, a concrete process, but the focus is on the fact that it involves change episodes that trigger interpretation and action. Discourse and interactions are considered,

examined, and theorized with more scrutiny, but they are still treated as objects that can be looked at from the outside.

In this design we encounter more single-case studies than in the Classical research design, sometimes with a longitudinal aspect that allows for process theories to be mobilized. Johnson et al. (2007) explain the distinction between variance and process theories by pointing to the elements that are considered in the analysis and the way they are conceptualized: 'While variance theories explain phenomena such as strategic change in terms of causal variables, process theories explain them in terms of the activities, events and choices that constitute them over time' (p. 54). We also find a thick description of the research context, with an emphasis on the case idiosyncrasies that allows for understanding the specificities of the discursive practices and social patterns encountered in the study (see for instance Denis et al., 2011).

Authors who use what we have labeled an Expanded research design try to depart from traditional conceptions of strategy, by taking further the idea that strategy may not just be a top-down process and that it may also involve emergent practices from all organizational levels. These authors will thus put the focus on new actors that had not been considered before but that may be involved in strategy processes, such as middle managers. For instance, Maitlis and Lawrence (2003) interviewed orchestra managers, board members, musicians, and so on. By doing so, they expanded the units of analysis considered and methods of data collection to include more diversity in data collection itself, and more variation of the types of data collected.

In the Expanded SAP research design, the units of analysis, or the Who, reflects this complexity, aiming to understand the underlying processes that support strategic activities. Units of analysis will also reflect the fact that strategy is studied through social interactions and discourses. For instance, we find units of analysis such as discursive practices in decision-making or strategy-making episodes

(Maitlis & Lawrence, 2003; Denis et al., 2011); knowledge productions (Moisander & Stenfors, 2009); identity dynamics in strategic change (Beech & Johnson, 2005); epistemic culture around strategy tools (Moisander & Stenfors, 2009); manifestations and consequences of strategic ambiguity (Abdallah & Langley, 2014); and middle managers' competencies displayed in meetings and interactions (Fauré & Rouleau, 2011).

Regarding data collection, the Expanded research design will involve direct observations at all levels of the organizations, whether they are semi- or non-participant observations, and these observations take place in meetings, workshops, or focus groups (see for instance Hoon, 2007). These observations constitute mostly the primary source of data, but they are often coupled with formal interviews. Using a combination of observations and interviews, Moisander and Stenfors (2009) met with participants before and after the focus group they organized to have the developers and the users of a strategy tool meet together and exchange ideas. Strategy and other organizational documents often complete the data set as secondary data sources. In these cases they will be considered for analysis along with meeting transcripts, as we see in Fauré and Rouleau's study (2011), in which accountants and middle managers' competencies in meetings were observed.

Reconstructing the course of events into chronological order to have a sequential understanding of strategy micro-processes and dynamics is often the first step of the analysis in the Expanded SAP research design. For instance, Maitlis and Lawrence 'developed a "decision story"' to 'chronicle the process' (2003, p. 115). This first step is most of the time followed by various steps of theory-data iterative loops, mixing inductive and deductive approaches. Again, grounded-theory and similar analytical approaches are favored, and we find a great consistency with the classical research design regarding data analysis, even if the nature of data considered is extended and if the objectivist aspect

of analysis is toned down. We note here the exception of studies using a narrative approach, as we see with Beech and Johnson (2005), who extracted the dominant narratives from their interviews and observations to understand the evolution of managers' identity dynamics during strategic change. Interpretation of data is carried out to unveil discourse uses, knowledge, and cultural dynamics around strategy practices.

The Comprehensive SAP Research Design

The Comprehensive research design departs from traditional conceptions of strategy, to embrace a view of strategy as a social reality carried out by discourse and dynamics across different levels. Strategy is even conceived as experienced by actors, and studying it through their experience can bring forth a new understanding of the phenomenon for the SAP field. Such design is consistent with a more subjective view of reality that emphasizes its symbolic and discursive aspects.

Papers associated with Comprehensive SAP research design generally propose more diversified data collection methods and data analysis than the Classical and Expanded ones. However, in this research design profile researchers do not conceive the individuals they are studying as informants or participants, but more as partners. The approach is generally more subjective or intersubjective, and the focus is on situated and enacted reality between managers, their counterparts, and their surroundings (Cunliffe, 2011). What is aimed at is finding a sort of middle ground between subjectivity and objectivity, to look at what emerges from confrontations of subjective experiences in situated interactions. As Nayak (2008, p. 424) put it, in the context of his study: "Experience" and "practical logic" point to a way of understanding individuals and organizations without bifurcating our modes of knowledge into subjective and objective dimensions'.

For some of the authors who characterized the Comprehensive profile, strategy is seen as an embodied and situated performance, involving individuals in interactions with one another, but also with artifacts, spaces, emotions, and so on. Strategy must be studied through fined-grained analysis of micro-practices performed in their specific context. Thus, discourse and materiality are studied at multiple levels with a combination of approaches, involving for instance a critical theoretical framework, or an ethnomethodological approach, or even conversation analysis. Again, Nayak (2008, p. 424) very well describes the benefits of such a combination of approaches in the context of his research:

Methodologically, the aim is to uncover the silent, latent and invisible relational space that 'lights up' the meaningful activities that are visible. Practices are a type of silence; they are things within a culture that are normatively kept just beneath the surface of language. It takes the form of an 'open secret', but one that no one verbalizes. Hence, addressing practices calls for a combination of subjective ethnomethodology and sociolinguistics approaches and the more objective discursive and governmentality approaches.

Regarding units of analysis, adopting a Comprehensive research design brings researchers to focus on material aspects of strategizing, sometimes in relation with space (Kaplan, 2011; Jarzabkowski et al., 2013; Balogun et al., 2015), as well as on the constitution of power through talk-in-interaction (Samra-Fredericks, 2005; Kornberger & Clegg, 2011). They also, for instance, look at 'competence' constituting or instantiating practice (Nayak, 2008), and unveil tacit knowledge associated with strategy practices (Rouleau, 2005). Performativity is key here, as well as complex processes underlying practices and studies in a detailed and intricate manner.

Data collection in the Comprehensive research design mostly involves ethnographic observations with people from all levels of the organization (Laine & Vaara, 2007), often including audio and video recordings, and even video-shadowing, as a primary data source

(Jarzabkowski et al., 2013; Gylfe et al., 2016). Multi-modality is emerging as a new way of approaching practices as they unfold. Here the interest is in gathering data that captures the natural interactions of the organizational members, an interest that demands a deep involvement in the field from the researchers. See this example taken from Samra-Fredericks (2005): 'Ethnographies of strategists at-work are extended to include audiorecording their naturally occurring talk-based interactive routines over time/space' (p. 803). As a primary data source we also see researchers engaging in workshops, training, meetings, and other types of involvement close or equal to action research. Some will even ask their research partners to participate in data gathering by collecting data themselves (Nayak, 2008). Interviews, strategy documents, and archival data are used as secondary data sources, providing information both on the situated context (i.e. meetings) or the general context of the study.

Finally, data analysis in the Comprehensive research design will be mainly inductive, and aimed at finding emergent processes that include considering different points of view across organization levels and participants (Jarzabkowski et al., 2013). As in previous research designs described, the analyses involve successive phases of coding and iterative loops with theory, but necessitate special attention to scaling-up from micro-practices to strategy processes. Consider this extract describing the last step of analysis by Jarzabkowski et al. (2013, p. 46):

having analytically distinguished between five artifacts and the practices of using them in strategy work, in a third step we zoomed out from the micro interactions (...) to identify how the situated use of these artifacts shapes the strategizing process. As part of this analysis, we iterated with the literature in order to conceptualize our findings...

We find a very similar analytical process in Balogun, Best, and Lê (2015), although in their case they also looked closely at data fragments to identify the various micro-aspects of the dynamics of materiality and embodied competencies they unveiled in their study.

SECTION 3: REFLECTIONS ON AN EVOLVING RESEARCH FIELD

SAP as a field of research has considerably evolved since its early days. As we have demonstrated above, methodological approaches have become more sophisticated and were expanded and enhanced to respond to various challenges and constraints and to enable a better grasp of the complex intricacies of strategizing. In what follows, we will first discuss the methodological evolutions sketched above in relation to the dimensions of the research design. Interestingly, as much as there has been an evolution on the Who (unit of analysis) and the How (data collection) dimensions of SAP research designs, the What (research strategy) and Why (data analysis) dimensions remain to be strengthened. In other words, we argue that although there has been a *technical* evolution of SAP research with regard to upon whom and how data is collected, there is still a dominant *epistemological* positioning that has not evolved on the matter of addressing social practices (what) and bridging local micro with broader macro issues in data analysis (why). We will articulate our argument around the four methodological conversations that were described above (role of ethnographic approaches, relationship with practitioners, need for innovative approaches, and connecting micro–macro issues).

The types of data collected in SAP research have considerably expanded and in recent instances qualify as ‘multi-modal’ (Aggerholm et al., 2012; Balogun et al., 2015; Jarzabkowski et al., 2015), and in some cases are collected on multiple sites (Smets et al., 2015). Data are broader in nature and scope, covering longer periods of time and incorporating elements like visual material (photo and video), material artifacts, and different types of textual platforms. In contrast to the early days of SAP research, interviews are almost always complemented by other types of data, be it self-reported data, audio recordings, detailed field notes, video

excerpts, or photographs. The modes of data collection are also very different, with more on-site involvement, longer presence in the field, broader scope in sample selection, and the use of approaches like ethnomethodology, shadowing, life-story interviews, focus groups, and archival research.

The criticisms addressed initially on the narrowness of methods, such as interviews to capture the complexity of social practice, have been answered with a wider variety of data and data collection methods. The way this challenge was addressed, if not entirely successful, was considerably stronger over the years. The Who, as a matter of consequence, was also expanded and the diversification of data sources and collection contributed to ‘opening up’ the research to new participants, thus broadening the set of actors involved in strategizing. The main manifestation of that phenomenon was the strong increase in research involving middle managers (e.g. Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Rouleau & Balogun, 2011), but it remained mostly limited to that set of actors (along with consultants) and was rarely expanded to other members of the organization, with the exception of a few studies (Maitlis and Lawrence, 2003; Balogun et al., 2015). Over the years, the Who was broader and more inclusive than the early concerns with the figure of the ‘strategist’. It is clear from our analysis of the evolution of research designs over the years that SAP research has gained in depth on those matters. From a *technical* point of view, therefore, SAP research is undoubtedly richer, subtler, and more sophisticated.

Nevertheless, the issues of agency and situatedness remain questionable. To convey a sense of situated agency, SAP research still relies on a conceptualization of agency that is too focused on the manager and that is still linked to an understanding of the manager as skilled, purposeful, capable, and with clear intentions, not to mention powerful in the sense that he/she holds most of the power for strategizing. Moreover, the nature of the relationship between researchers and

practitioners observed or interviewed has not been redefined as Balogun et al. (2003) had proposed. As discussed above in the methodological conversation on the need for innovative approaches, it is not as much the methodologies themselves that need to be 'new' as the way they are applied with a 'practice lens' and how they innovatively approach strategy practice. So far, the challenge of reconsidering agency and situatedness in SAP remains incompletely addressed since agency is mostly rooted in activity and activity is still the cornerstone of SAP research. The What and Why dimensions of the SAP research *dispositif* therefore remain mainly unchallenged. The issue of capturing practices, although partly addressed by encouraging the use of ethnographic approaches, is still done, even in the Comprehensive design profile, as an objectivist exercise.

The current methodological conversation around the use of ethnographic approaches in SAP is accurately described by Cunliffe (2015), who argues for more subjectivist analyses involving a stronger reflexive positioning and who deplores the dominant 'realist' way of 'telling the tale' (Van Maanen, 1988). Our analysis concurs with her argument that there is a strong concern for model-building, based on data categories, which erodes the richness of that data on many occasions. If we understand the What of research designs as the research roadmap or the research positioning regarding a specific definition of strategy, then we face the critical issue of how strategy is consistently being defined in SAP. Despite the concern with practice and the belief that strategy is a social phenomenon that takes form in what people do, most studies still have an underlying mainstream definition of strategy. Indeed, in most cases and as Phillips and Lawrence (2012) argue, strategy is conceived of as the activities around what is labeled 'strategy' in the organization (strategy meetings, plans, retreats, episodes, etc.), but strategy in action or strategy as practice is broader in that it encompasses everything people understand

as strategic in the organization. It is the *actioning* of what people understand/interpret/absorb/read as being strategy. Strategy in an SAP perspective does not pertain to a *function* of the organization. It is inscribed in a much larger situated context that draws on wider social practices. As long as SAP research *objectifies* and *functionalizes* strategy by only addressing what is verbalized as strategy within organizations, it will miss its non-verbalized, emotional, and profoundly social nature.

Moreover, although Comprehensive designs have demonstrated a deeper concern with the nature of social practices and the intricate weaving of networks of activity, emotion, cognition, discourse, and materiality into social practices within specific institutional settings, the way this has been done, or the Why dimension in the research design, is still, as we have mentioned above, mainly relying on an objectivist ontology. Studies are adorned with sophisticated tables, data displays, multiple order categories, and complex recursive models that unfortunately functionalize, de-contextualize, and objectify these intricate weavings that are claimed in the first place. More subjective, narrative, and interpretive analyses are needed to capture in a subtler way the 'touch and smell' of practice (Nicolini, 2012).

The drive toward categorization and neat data displays that we have observed is in large part the result of an intricate set of institutional constraints ranging from localized or country-specific pressures on academic research (such as the UK's Research Assessment Exercise, for instance, but other countries have similar evaluation processes) for the prevalence of strong 'templates' of qualitative research such as the 'Gioia methodology' (Langley & Abdallah, 2011; Gioia et al., 2013). Indeed, in recent SAP research, the influence of that template can be seen in the exponential use of data structure tables and first and second order categories and concepts in everything from ethnographies to discourse analyses. Data analyses are therefore mainly depicted with a functionalist

undertone that stems from the hegemonic nature of US publication outlets that contribute to the need to develop templates of ‘good research’ and institutionalize them. More subjectivist and reflexive approaches are hence difficult to embrace in the current context if they are doomed to a non-publishable future. Consequently, and as we have argued, technical evolutions in research designs are steady while epistemological ones are very rare. Developing studies with a different epistemological positioning, a different view of practice, ones that would be more subjectivist, closer to vividly conveying the fabric of social life and to its intricate weaving of emotions, language, materiality, and context constitutes, therefore, the next great challenge for the field of SAP.

SAP at the Crossroads: Where Do We Go from Here?

Despite what we deemed technical progress, innovative approaches are yet to be developed consistently in SAP research, specifically in the way data are analyzed and on the way social practice is addressed (the What and Why dimensions). Despite calls for more consistent use of videos and photographs, for instance, the analytical potential attached to their use is still under-developed. Also, Balogun et al. (2014) have argued for ‘connecting’ the study of strategy discourse to socio-material, sensemaking, and power dimensions in order to understand complex social processes. How to do so is the question. Is it possible to analyze data without boxing it up? Are boxes and arrows the only sensemaking tools to convey the complexity of social practice? Can SAP studies liberate themselves from the constraints of data displays and *a posteriori* classifications in multiple order categories? We argue that it is not only possible but also desirable in order to honor the ‘as-practice’ part of SAP. The turn to narrative storytelling, dialog, multi-vocal techniques where multiple researchers

superpose their analyses, as well as emerging concepts such as crystallization in qualitative research (Ellingson, 2009; Vik & Bute, 2009), are possible innovative approaches that could benefit SAP research.

The analytic potential of more subjectivist and reflexive approaches is yet to be explored by SAP researchers, but it needs to be done with the assurance of publication potential in reputable academic outlets. However, the mere existence of that potential would entail a challenging of the current institutional arrangements from the inside. In other words, SAP researchers who are also SAP reviewers have a responsibility to challenge the established templates and push for a renewal in data analysis techniques that would enable a true ‘opening-up’ of SAP research. As reviewers, we should push for more innovative research designs on *all* their dimensions and transform the reviewing process from a gate-keeping exercise to a gate-opening one, embracing bolder analytical moves, subtler conceptualizations of strategy, and more creative writing-up techniques. One way to do so would be to propose the development of Special Issues by legitimate SAP researchers that could be platforms for exploration and innovation. Additionally, new forms of writing ethnographic accounts that are more subjective and reflexive (Ellis & Bochner, 1996), closer to the ‘texture’ of life and practices (Gherardi, 1995), or technically innovative (Smets et al., 2015) are interesting avenues to explore.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have shown how SAP research has evolved methodologically in response to the many challenges that it faced and has coalesced around four important current methodological conversations that mirror the four dimensions of the research *dispositif* that we have identified: Research strategy (What), unit of analysis (Who), Data

collection techniques (How), and Data analysis strategies (Why). Based on a recent review of SAP publications between 2002 and 2015, we were able to identify three research design profiles labeled Classical, Expanded, and Comprehensive, which show how SAP research has evolved across time around the four dimensions of research designs. We argue that, despite a clear technical evolution on the Who and How dimensions, work remains to be done to innovate on the What and Why, whose fundamental assumptions are still unchallenged. We advocate a stronger engagement with more subjectivist and reflexive approaches and we call for SAP researchers to take a stand in their quality of reviewers of SAP work and enable an exploration of new methodological territories beyond the templates enclosure.

Note

- 1 All references available from the authors.

REFERENCES

- Abdallah, C., & Langley, A. (2014). The Double Edge of Ambiguity in Strategic Planning. *Journal of Management Studies*, 51(2), 235–64.
- Aggerholm, H. K., Asmuß, B., & Thomsen, C. (2012). The Role of Recontextualization in the Multivocal, Ambiguous Process of Strategizing. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 21(4), 413–28.
- Angwin, D., Paroutis, S., & Miston, S. (2009). Connecting up Strategy: Are Senior Strategy Directors a Missing Link? *California Management Review*, 51(3), 74–94.
- Balogun, J., & Johnson, G. (2005). From Intended Strategies to Unintended Outcomes: The Impact of Change Recipient Sensemaking. *Organization Studies*, 26(11), 1573–601.
- Balogun, J., Best, K., & Lê, J. (2015). Selling the Object of Strategy: How Frontline Workers Realize Strategy through their Daily Work. *Organization Studies*, 36(10), 1285–313.
- Balogun, J., Huff, A. S., & Johnson, P. (2003). Three Responses to the Methodological Challenges of Studying Strategizing. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(1), 197–224.
- Balogun, J., Jacobs, C., Jarzabkowski, P., Mantere, S., & Vaara, E. (2014). Placing Strategy Discourse in Context: Sociomateriality, Sensemaking, and Power. *Journal of Management Studies*, 51(2), 175–201.
- Beech, N., & Johnson, P. (2005). Discourses of Disrupted Identities in the Practice of Strategic Change: The Mayor, the Street-Fighter and the Insider-Out. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 18(1), 31–47.
- Chia, R., & Rasche, A. (2010). Epistemological Alternatives for Research Strategy as Practice: Building and Dwelling Worldviews, in *Cambridge Handbook of Strategy as Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 34–46.
- Corradi, G., Gherardi, S., & Verzelloni, L. (2010). Through the Practice Lens: Where is the Bandwagon of Practice-Based Studies Heading? *Management Learning*, 41(3), 265–83.
- Cunliffe, A. L. (2011). Crafting Qualitative Research: Morgan and Smircich 30 Years On. *Organizational Research Methods*, 14(4), 647–73.
- Cunliffe, A. L. (2015). Using Ethnography in Strategy as Practice Research, in *Cambridge Handbook of Strategy as Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 431–46.
- Denis, J.-L., Dompierre, G., Langley, A., & Rouleau, L. (2011). Escalating Indecision: Between Reification and Strategic Ambiguity. *Organization Science*, 22(1), 225–44.
- Dittrich, K., Golden-Biddle, K., Feldman, E., & Locke, K. (2015). Constructing Contribution in Strategy-as-Practice Research, in *Cambridge Handbook of Strategy as Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 95–110.
- Ellingson, L. L. (2009). *Engaging Crystallization in Qualitative Research: An Introduction*. London: Sage.
- Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. P. (eds) (1996). *Composing Ethnography: Alternative Forms*

- of *Qualitative Writing*. Lanham, MD: Rowman Altamira.
- Eppler, M. J., & Platts, K. W. (2009). Visual Strategizing: The Systematic Use of Visualization in the Strategic-Planning Process. *Long Range Planning*, 42(1), 42–74.
- Fauré, B., & Rouleau, L. (2011). The Strategic Competence of Accountants and Middle Managers in Budget Making. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 36(3), 167–82.
- Fumasoli, T., Pinheiro, R., & Stensaker, B. (2015). Handling Uncertainty of Strategic Ambitions – The Use of Organizational Identity as a Risk-Reducing Device. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 38(13–14), 1030–40.
- Gherardi, S. (1995). When Will He Say: 'Today the Plates are Soft'? The Management of Ambiguity and Situated Decision-Making. *Culture and Organization*, 1(1), 9–27.
- Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. (2013). Seeking Qualitative Rigor in Inductive Research Notes on the Gioia Methodology. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(1), 15–31.
- Golsorkhi, D., Rouleau, L., Seidl, D., & Vaara, E. (2015). *Cambridge Handbook of Strategy as Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gylfe, P., Franck, H., Lebaron, C., & Mantere, S. (2016). Video Methods in Strategy Research: Focusing on Embodied Cognition. *Strategic Management Journal*, 37(1), 133–48.
- Heracleous, L., & Jacobs, C. D. (2008). Crafting Strategy: The Role of Embodied Metaphors. *Long Range Planning*, 41(3), 309–25.
- Hoon, C. (2007). Committees as Strategic Practice: The Role of Strategic Conversation in a Public Administration. *Human Relations*, 60(6), 921–52.
- Huff, A. S., Neyer, A. K., & Möslin, K. (2010). Broader Methods to Support New Insights into Strategizing, *Cambridge Handbook of Strategy as Practice*, 201–16.
- Jarratt, D., & Stiles, D. (2010). How are Methodologies and Tools Framing Managers' Strategizing Practice in Competitive Strategy Development? *British Journal of Management*, 21(1), 28–43.
- Jarzabkowski, P. (2003). Strategic Practices: An Activity Theory Perspective on Continuity and Change. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(1), 23–55.
- Jarzabkowski, P. (2008). Shaping Strategy as a Structuration Process. *Academy of Management Journal*, 51(4), 621–50.
- Jarzabkowski, P., Balogun, J., & Seidl, D. (2007). Strategizing: The challenges of a practice perspective. *Human relations*, 60(1), 5–27.
- Jarzabkowski, P., Burke, G., & Spee, A. P. (2015). Constructing Spaces for Strategic Work: A Multimodal Perspective. *British Journal of Management*, 26(S1), S26–S47.
- Jarzabkowski, P., Spee, A. P., & Smets, M. (2013). Material Artifacts: Practices for Doing Strategy with 'Stuff'. *European Management Journal*, 31(1), 41–54.
- Johnson, G., Langley, A., Melin, L., & Whittington, R. (2007). *Strategy as Practice. Research Direction and Resources*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Johnson, G., Melin, L., & Whittington, R. (2003). Micro Strategy and Strategizing: Towards an Activity-Based View. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(1), 3–22.
- Johnson, G., Prashantham, S., Floyd, S. W., & Bourque, N. (2010). The Ritualization of Strategy Workshops. *Organization Studies*, 31(12), 1589–1618.
- Kaplan, S. (2011). Strategy and PowerPoint: An Inquiry into the Epistemic Culture and Machinery of Strategy Making. *Organization Science*, 22(2), 320–46.
- Kornberger, M., & Clegg, S. (2011). Strategy as Performative Practice: The Case of Sydney 2030. *Strategic Organization*, 9(2), 136–62.
- Laine, P.-M., & Vaara, E. (2007). Struggling Over Subjectivity: A Discursive Analysis of Strategic Development in an Engineering Group. *Human Relations*, 60(1), 29–58.
- Langley, A., & Abdallah, C. (2011). Templates and Turns in Qualitative Studies of Strategy and Management. *Research Methodology in Strategy and Management*, 6, 201–35. D. Ketchen and D. Bergh (Eds). Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Maitlis, S., & Lawrence, T. B. (2003). Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark: Understanding Failure in Organizational Strategizing. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(1), 109–39.
- Mantere, S. (2005). Strategic Practices as Enablers and Disablers of Championing

- Activity. *Strategic Organization*, 3(2), 157–84.
- Mantere, S., & Vaara, E. (2008). On the Problem of Participation in Strategy: A Critical Discursive Perspective. *Organization Science*, 19(2), 341–58.
- McCabe, D. (2010). Strategy-as-Power: Ambiguity, Contradiction and the Exercise of Power in a UK Building Society. *Organization*, 17(2), 151–75.
- Moisander, J., & Stenfors, S. (2009). Exploring the Edges of Theory-Practice Gap: Epistemic Cultures in Strategy-Tool Development and Use. *Organization*, 16(2), 227–47.
- Mueller, F., Whittle, A., Gilchrist, A., & Lenney, P. (2013). Politics and Strategy Practice: An Ethnomethodologically-Informed Discourse Analysis Perspective. *Business History*, 55(7), 1168–99.
- Nayak, A. (2008). Experiencing Creativity in Organisations: A Practice Approach. *Long Range Planning*, 41(4), 420–39.
- Nicolini, D. (2012). *Practice Theory, Work, and Organization: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nordqvist, M., & Melin, L. (2008). Strategic Planning Champions: Social Craftspersons, Artful Interpreters and Known Strangers. *Long Range Planning*, 41(3), 326–44.
- Paroutis, S., & Pettigrew, A. (2007). Strategizing in the Multi-Business Firm: Strategy Teams at Multiple Levels and Over Time. *Human Relations*, 60(1), 99–135.
- Phillips, N., & Lawrence, T. B. (2012). The Turn to Work in Organization and Management Theory: Some Implications for Strategic Organization. *Strategic Organization*, 10(3), 223–30.
- Rouleau, L. (2005). Micro-Practices of Strategic Sensemaking and Sensegiving: How Middle Managers Interpret and Sell Change Every Day. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(7), 1413–41.
- Rouleau, L. (2013). Strategy-as-Practice Research at a Crossroads. *M@n@gement*, 16(5), 574–92.
- Rouleau, L., & Balogun, J. (2011). Middle Managers, Strategic Sensemaking, and Discursive Competence. *Journal of Management Studies*, 48(5), 953–83.
- Salvato, C. (2003). The Role of Micro-Strategies in the Engineering of Firm Evolution. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(1), 83–108.
- Samra-Fredericks, D. (2005). Strategic Practice, 'Discourse' and the Everyday Interactional Constitution of 'Power Effects'. *Organization*, 12(6), 803–41.
- Smets, M., Jarzabkowski, P., Burke, G. T., & Spee, P. (2015). Reinsurance Trading in Lloyd's of London: Balancing Conflicting-Yet-Complementary Logics in Practice. *Academy of Management Journal*, 58(3), 932–70.
- Vaara, E., & Durand, R. (2012). How to Connect Strategy Research with Broader Issues That Matter? *Strategic Organization*, 10(3), 248–55.
- Vaara, E., & Whittington, R. (2012). Strategy-as-Practice: Taking Social Practices Seriously. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 6(1), 285–336.
- Van Maanen, J. (1988). *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Venkateswaran, R., & Prabhu, G. N. (2011). Taking Stock of Research Methods in Strategy-as-Practice. In Antony Bryant (Ed) *Leading Issues in Business Research Methods*, Vol. 1. Reading, UK: Academic Publishing International Limited.
- Vesa, M., & Vaara, E. (2014). Strategic Ethnography 2.0: Four Methods for Advancing Strategy Process and Practice Research. *Strategic Organization*, 12(4), 288–98.
- Vik, T. A., & Bute, J. J. (2009). Utilizing Crystallization in Qualitative Methods. *Review of Communication*, 9(4), 340–3.
- Whittington, R. (2003). The Work of Strategizing and Organizing: For a Practice Perspective. *Strategic Organization*, 1(1), 117–25.
- Whittington, R. (2006). Completing the Practice Turn in Strategy Research. *Organization Studies*, 27(5), 613–34.

The Case Study in Management Research: Beyond the Positivist Legacy of Eisenhardt and Yin?

Rebecca Piekkari and Catherine Welch

INTRODUCTION

The case study remains a very popular – if not the most popular – research strategy that qualitative management scholars claim to be using (see e.g. Welch et al., 2013). Yet, as we will argue in this chapter, it is often poorly understood in management disciplines and, when applied, it rarely lives up to the ideals of how it has been defined. Perhaps this is why the case study, despite its indisputable popularity in management, is not well represented in methodological handbooks such as the present one. Numerous definitions of the case study exist: it is regarded as an empirical inquiry (Yin, 2014), a research strategy (Eisenhardt, 1989), a form of reporting (Wolcott, 2002) and even as an ideological commitment to qualitative positivism (Mir, 2011; Moore, 2011). In this chapter, we define the case study as a research strategy that involves more than the choice of method for data collection or analysis (Hartley, 2004). Rather, the case study ‘examines,

through the use of a variety of data sources, a phenomenon in its naturalistic context, with the purpose of “confronting” theory with the empirical world’ (Piekkari et al., 2009, p. 569).

The two most popular methodological authorities on the case study in management remain Kathleen Eisenhardt and Robert K. Yin, both of whom positioned the case study against other qualitative approaches. While now in its fifth edition, Yin’s original version of his book on case studies was published in 1984. Each edition has contained modifications and additional material, but the main thrust of the book is largely unchanged. Eisenhardt’s roadmap for the case study was published in 1989. Her later treatments of the topic (Eisenhardt, 1991; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007) have rearticulated and defended this vision. This means that the two methodological authorities on case research in management date back to the 1980s. While the qualitative methodological community has been extremely vibrant since

the 1980s (for evidence, see e.g. Symon & Cassell, 2012), this intellectual ferment has seemingly passed the case study by. Instead, in management the case study clings stubbornly to the 1980s and is in danger of being labelled anachronistic and outdated. Over time, Eisenhardt and Yin's guidelines have become solidified into rigid templates that reviewers and examiners enforce as the 'only way to conduct case studies right'.

In this chapter, we revisit the nature of this 1980s case study, which we have elsewhere termed the 'modernist' case study (Welch et al., 2013) and which represents a form of 'qualitative positivism' (Piekkari & Welch, 2011). By referring to 'qualitative positivism', we follow the usage proposed by Prasad and Prasad (2002). That is, qualitative positivism adopts qualitative methods and methodologies, but accompanies them with positivistic assumptions about the nature of social reality (ontology) and the production of knowledge about this reality (epistemology). To be more specific about these (often unstated) commitments, '[r]eality is assumed to be concrete, separate from the researcher, and cognisable through the use of so-called objective methods of data collection' (Prasad & Prasad, 2002, p. 6). These assumptions are rejected by interpretive, critical and 'post' traditions (for a review of non-positivist research traditions, see Prasad, 2005 and Duberley et al., 2012). The crucial insight of the term 'qualitative positivism' lies in breaking the commonly held dichotomy between positivistic quantitative research and interpretive qualitative research.

While the strength of the positivist case study was its ability to defend qualitative research to the mainstream, it has also attracted criticism, particularly from fellow qualitative researchers both in and outside of management. Yet this criticism has often been sidelined, which is why we wish to review it in this chapter. We then range beyond the boundaries of the management discipline to consider key developments in case study methodology in other fields of

social sciences. There, we find a very different evolution. Rather than being frozen in the 1980s, the case study has enjoyed something of a renaissance. We identify some key insights from these developments, which we argue can form the basis for a reassessment of the case study in management. We conclude by offering some more recent texts on the case study that can be a useful introduction for those using the case study for the first time, those seeking to refresh their understanding of their approach, or those teaching or supervising MSc and PhD students. To preview our answer to the question we pose in our title to this chapter, we conclude that while the case study in management has not yet gone beyond Eisenhardt and Yin, there are many resources available to do so.

THE POSITIVIST CASE STUDY

In this section, we will first summarise the key features of the positivist case study: its philosophical underpinnings, its view of the case study as a 'bridge' to generalisations, its distinctiveness in relation to other qualitative approaches and its preference for multiple rather than single case studies. Moreover, we will discuss how the positivist case study provides concrete recommendations and procedures on how to design and implement a case study to arrive at tangible results. Throughout our discussion we will contrast and compare Eisenhardt's and Yin's views on the case study. Although these key methodological authorities have a lot in common, their opinions and emphases are by no means identical. This often goes unnoticed in published research accounts, because qualitative management researchers tend to refer to Yin and Eisenhardt jointly as if they had identical views.

We will start by placing the positivist case study in its appropriate temporal context. In 1979, *Administrative Science Quarterly* published a landmark special issue edited

by John van Maanen, titled 'Reclaiming Qualitative Methods for Organizational Research'. Amongst other contributions, it featured an article by Matthew Miles which in its very title denoted qualitative data an 'attractive nuisance'. Miles criticises the grounded theory approach to qualitative fieldwork and the lack of established approaches to data analysis. He argues that, at best, 'analysis of qualitative data is a mysterious, half-formulated art' (Miles, 1979, p. 593) and poses a provocative question: 'How can we be sure that an "early", "undeniable", "serendipitous" finding is not, in fact, *wrong*?' (Miles, 1979, p. 590). Yin (1981, p. 58) followed this up with a response. His concern was that Miles's 'disarmingly candid rendition of the perils of qualitative analysis ... leaves the reader with a sense that qualitative analysis – and its implicit companion, the case study – cannot yet be regarded a rational, much less scientific venture'.

Yin's aim in his rejoinder, as well as his 1984 book, therefore became to resolve the case study 'crisis' by providing systematic, rigorous and repeatable steps that researchers can take not just to ensure, but also to demonstrate to others, the scientific worth of the case study as a research strategy. Part of Yin's argument was that the quality of a case study (and of qualitative research more generally) can meet the same standards by which quantitative research is judged: internal validity, external validity, construct validity and reliability (Cook & Campbell, 1979). The only difference is that these quality criteria are assured using procedures that are distinct from those in a quantitative study. Yin provides a catalogue of these procedures, such as triangulation, establishing a chain of evidence and providing an audit trail. Using the procedures he outlines, a researcher can achieve the systematic rigour required to demonstrate a scientific contribution. Yin did not overtly declare his philosophical position in the early editions of his book. In the latest edition, however, he makes a brief confession: '[m]uch of case study research as it is

described in this book appears to be oriented toward a realist perspective, which assumes the existence of a single reality that is independent of the observer' (Yin, 2014, p. 17). In keeping with his training as an experimental psychologist, Yin derives inspiration from traditional experimental techniques.

Eisenhardt's (1989) roadmap draws very heavily on Yin's 'rational' and pragmatic design approach to the case study. She imports many of the concepts that he introduced in his book such as pattern-matching, theoretical sampling and replication logic (literal and theoretical replication) used in multiple experiments (Yin, 2014, p. 57; 2009, pp. 53–4). Eisenhardt remains true to the ideal of the positivist quest for generalisability? – and, unlike Yin, is explicit in this commitment. Toward the end of her paper, she clarifies that 'the process described here adopts a positivist view of research. That is, the process is directed toward the development of testable hypotheses and theory, which are generalisable across settings' (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 546). In this context, she views the role of the case study as an instrument or 'bridge' to develop hypotheses that can subsequently be tested through the statistical analysis of large-scale surveys (Figure 21.1). The role of the case study is to act as the handmaiden to this endeavour – as an intermediary step in the quest for generalisations, rather than an end in itself. This stance was even more accentuated in her later article with Graebner (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007, p. 25):

The case study is one of the best (if not the best) of the bridges from rich qualitative evidence to mainstream deductive research. Its emphasis on developing constructs, measures and testable propositions makes inductive research consistent with the emphasis on testable theory within mainstream deductive research. In fact, inductive and deductive logics are mirrors of one another, with inductive theory building from cases producing new theory from data and deductive theory testing completing the cycle by using data to test theory.

Eisenhardt's cyclical model of the theorising process, as depicted in Figure 21.1, is strongly

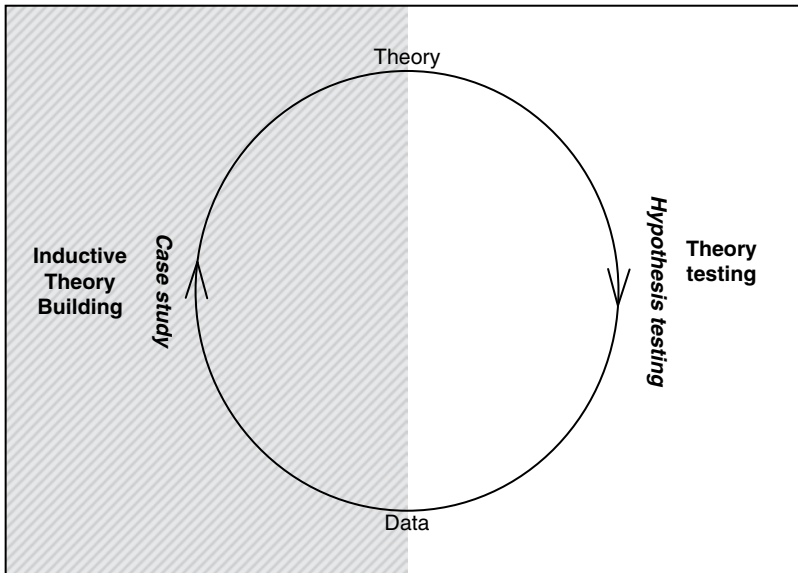


Figure 21.1 Eisenhardt's positivist view of the case study

Source: Piekkari & Welch (2011, p. 8)

positivist in other ways than the search for generalisation. It also demonstrates faith in the possibility of generating theory-free, unbiased observations, allowing the development of theory that 'closely mirrors reality' (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 547). In the search for testable propositions, she favours the specification of correlational relationships between constructs, avoiding any reference to causality. This is despite the fact that, as she notes, qualitative data can provide insight into 'why or why not' particular relationships occur.

Ultimately, the positivist approach outlined above is about how to design and implement a case study. Eisenhardt (1989) provides a practical roadmap for theory-building from case studies and Yin devotes a considerable part of his book to research design, which he defines as '*a logical plan for getting from here to there*' (Yin, 2014, p. 28, emphasis original; see also Yin, 2009, p. 26). For Yin, the research design is a 'blueprint' that determines the questions to be asked, the data to be collected and the appropriate analytical

techniques (2014, p. 29; 2009, p. 26). This blueprint is essential because it 'helps avoid the situation in which the evidence does not address the initial research questions' (2014, p. 29; 2009, p. 27). If the research questions change and 'such unsuspected slippage' does occur, the research needs to 'start over again, with a new research design' (2014, p. 55; 2009, p. 52). Yin regards shift in research design as a weakness which should be avoided (although later editions of his book are less strident on this point than he was initially). Eisenhardt (1989) is not as strict in her view on flexibility in research design, recognising that changes to the design may be desirable to pursue 'a new line of thinking [that] emerges during the research'. However, she cautions that this flexibility 'is not a license to be unsystematic'; rather, it should be seen as 'controlled opportunism' (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 539). Like Yin, her concern is to demonstrate the systematic and repeatable steps that case researchers can take to ensure the rigour of their studies.

COMPARING THE CASE STUDY À LA EISENHARDT VERSUS YIN

Eisenhardt diverges from Yin in three important respects that have shaped the way the case study tradition has developed in management disciplines. Unlike Yin, she prefers theory-building case studies, her template draws on grounded theory, and she believes in the superiority of multiple rather than single case study designs in producing robust theory. These differences between the two methodological authorities will now be discussed as they are, too often, missed by those who cite them. The differences are worth highlighting because they show that the case study tradition is less uniform than it is often presented: even the two authorities that are typically used in tandem, in fact provide alternative possibilities in terms of how the case study might be used.

The first difference lies in Eisenhardt's strong preference for 'theory-building' case studies that induce theory from data. She explains that 'theory-building research is begun as close as possible to the ideal of no theory under consideration and no hypotheses to test' (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 536). This, however, leads her into difficulties as she seeks to reconcile this ideal with the need to use precise measures in fieldwork. She concedes that '[a] priori specification of constructs ... is valuable because it permits researchers to measure constructs more accurately' (p. 536). She seems to struggle to explain how case study researchers should meet the simultaneous requirement of entering the field with an open mind, 'tabula rasa', yet at the same time be guided by theory.

Unlike Eisenhardt, Yin does not limit his discussion of the role of the case study to theory-building. As is well known, Yin identifies three purposes for the case study, only one of which is the inductive (or in his terminology, 'exploratory') case study. The others are the descriptive case study, to which Yin pays very little attention, and the explanatory

case study. What is less well known is that it is, in fact, the explanatory case study that is his main interest. In management, however, this has been obscured by the popularity of the exploratory case study. In Yin's view, the explanatory case study is a superior vehicle for theoretical insight – in particular, for the isolation of causal relationships. Such case studies can be used for a variety of theory-testing purposes (Welch et al., 2011), such as to test propositions, adjudicate amongst rival explanations, revise existing theories and establish causal relationships. The explanatory case study can be likened to a 'natural experiment' (Lee, 1989). As such, its strength lies in its high degree of internal validity, so long as it is properly designed and carried out. The proper application of analytical techniques enables the researcher to converge on a set of causal relationships, isolating them from the broader context of the case. Other cases can then be investigated to establish if the causal relationships occur as predicted, just as multiple experiments are used to refine and test theory. Perhaps due to his background as an experimental psychologist, Yin is therefore comfortable with the goal of establishing causal relationships.

The second contrast between Eisenhardt and Yin is the former's close identification with grounded theory in promoting her inductive theory-building case study. Eisenhardt distances herself from other qualitative traditions, such as ethnography, that favour 'rich, complex description' and avoid generalisability and universal claims (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 546). Instead she aligns herself with the original version of grounded theory proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), importing key procedures such as theoretical sampling, theoretical saturation and joint collection and coding of data. The influence of grounded theory on case research has only been reinforced by the release of software packages such as NVivo, to which qualitative researchers often refer in demonstrating the rigour of their approach. In contrast, Yin has steadfastly distinguished the case study from the grounded

theory tradition. He advocates that the case study should be theory-driven from the start – as befits a natural experiment. Accordingly, he explains that the ‘role of theory development, prior to the conduct of any data collection, is one point of difference between case studies and related methods such as ... “grounded theory”’ (Yin, 2014, p. 37; Yin, 2009, p. 35). In this regard, Yin favours a more deductive mode of theorising for the case study. Many of the procedures that Yin (2009) advocates – such as replication strategy, pattern-matching and time-series analysis – are adaptations of experimental techniques, not of grounded theory. Similarly, his reply to concerns about the case study’s generalisability is to argue that like the experiment, the case study generalises to theoretical propositions and not to populations (Yin, 2009). Lack of statistical generalisability does not preclude case studies from having a strong explanatory contribution to make.

The third difference between Eisenhardt and Yin stems from the role granted to the single case. Eisenhardt has remained a strong advocate of the multiple case study and its superior potential in theory-building. In their joint article, Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) are even more critical of the single case study. They affirm that ‘theory building from multiple cases typically yields more robust, generalisable and testable theory than single case research’ (p. 27). Yin (2014, p. 64) agrees that in general, the multiple case study is more robust and ‘having at least two cases should be your goal’. Nonetheless, he does see a role for the single case study. He specifies the single case study is particularly suited to the following purposes: to test a well-formulated theory in a critical case, to uncover an extreme, unusual or common case, to investigate a revelatory case, which has previously been inaccessible for research, or to follow a longitudinal case (Yin, 2014, pp. 51–3; 2009, pp. 47–9).

To sum up, Eisenhardt’s 1989 ‘roadmap’ for the inductive, exploratory theory-building case study has been extremely influential in

management disciplines and legitimised the use of qualitative research methods more generally. However, its popularity has had the consequence of delegitimising the explanatory power of the case study that Yin advocates and narrowing its role. At the same time, Eisenhardt has also de-emphasised context by treating it only as the first descriptive step before data analysis. This puts her at odds with other qualitative research traditions. Accordingly, we now turn to the criticisms that the positivist approach to the case study has generated amongst qualitative researchers, both within management and outside it.

CRITICISMS OF THE POSITIVIST CASE STUDY

Eisenhardt’s and Yin’s prescriptions for the case study have attracted criticism, especially from constructivist qualitative researchers who worry that these authors have surrendered too much to the positivist mainstream. The critics vocally defend the depth of the single case study design and its ability to provide a particularised understanding of the case itself. They hark back to earlier case study traditions, which emphasise rich contextual insight and the subjective experiences and ‘emic’ meanings of the research. In this section, we profile the arguments from three critics, all of whom point to the ways in which Eisenhardt or Yin cast aside features of the case study that others consider to be strengths.

One of the earliest critiques was a rejoinder published in the *Academy of Management Review (AMR)* by Dyer and Wilkins (1991, p. 613), who brand Eisenhardt’s roadmap a ‘hybrid form of case research’ because ‘it includes many of the attributes of hypothesis-testing research’. PhD students in courses we have taught have typically already read Eisenhardt’s paper, but few are familiar with the debate it sparked in the pages of *AMR*. Dyer and Wilkins mount a defence of the

single case study, which they argue is the form taken in the 'classics' in the management field. These seminal works had the influence and longevity that they did precisely because of, not in spite of, the rich contextual understanding that they were able to achieve from their in-depth knowledge of a single setting. The route to 'paradigm-challenging' or 'paradigm-creating' insight is precisely through this depth of understanding. For Dyer and Wilkins, the distinction between the classic case study and Eisenhardt's template is not fundamentally a paradigmatic one. They point out that these earlier generations of case researchers were not just interpretivists, but also included those with positivist commitments. What distinguishes these case researchers is, rather, their commitment to penetrating the 'deep structure' of social behaviour, something that is only possible with extensive and in-depth knowledge of the case setting.

Dyer and Wilkins's concern is that Eisenhardt's template for the case study sacrifices precisely this depth, trading off 'contextual insight' for cross-organisational comparisons (1991, p. 614). They argue that Eisenhardt's focus on constructs stripped of their context results in 'thin' explanations that do not penetrate the 'deep structure' of social dynamics. Her advice to pre-specify constructs of interest prior to fieldwork also reduces the likelihood that the researcher will be open to surprises, making it less likely that the study will go beyond the bounds of existing theory, and resulting only in incremental advances. To illustrate these points, Dyer and Wilkins analyse Eisenhardt and Bourgeois' 1988 paper, which Eisenhardt (1989) uses as a model for her roadmap. Eisenhardt and Bourgeois study how politics affect strategic decision-making processes of eight firms in the 'high-velocity' microcomputer industry. Dyer and Wilkins criticise the central construct in their paper, political behaviour, as being narrowly defined – as Eisenhardt and Bourgeois themselves acknowledge – and abstracted away from the

context. Consequently, as readers we do not understand how and why political behaviour was generated from the contextual conditions in individual case companies. There is also no indication of the meaning that the focal decision being studied in each case held for participants – whether they regarded it as a strategic decision, why and in what way. The intention, as Eisenhardt and Bourgeois point out, is to make the constructs and situations across firms comparable by focusing on similarities between them. However, Dyer and Wilkins question what is then left out: 'How much deep structure have we seen if we only look at what is common about politics across organizations? Wouldn't the differences in how politics occur across organizations be potentially interesting and challenging to current conceptions?' (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991, p. 615). Leaving out contextual understanding from a study therefore potentially leads to a loss of theoretical insight.

While Eisenhardt's influence has not extended beyond the management field, Yin's version of the case study has received some attention from sociologists. In an important study that tracks the evolution of the case study methodology from its early use by the Chicago School of sociologists, Platt (1992) designates Yin's book as something of a watershed. As she points out, Yin was successful in regaining scientific respectability for the case study, but at the price of surrendering some of its traditional strengths. The 'classic' case study of the interwar period was not directed from the outset by a particular theoretical perspective; it was concerned with the subjective experiences and meanings of participants; it valorised depth and richness of data, which was typically obtained through participant observation; and it preferred the in-depth single case study over the multiple case design. All these features have been downplayed or even overturned in Yin's version.

Another critic of the type of case study advocated by Yin, writing at about the same time as Platt, was the educational researcher

Robert Stake (1994). In Stake's view, scholars such as Yin prioritise the quest for possible generalisations (i.e. an instrumental approach) over particularised understanding of 'the case itself' (i.e. an intrinsic approach). For Stake, a holistic understanding of the case must always come first – before (and, depending on the case researcher's purpose, maybe even in the place of) any theory-building efforts. He regards rich description of the case as a goal in itself. Moreover, Stake emphasises the limits of human knowledge. While the case researcher enters the field and selects a case with certain expectations, these are sure to be dashed. He cautions that '[o]ne cannot know at the outset what the issues, the perceptions, the theory will be' (Stake, 1994, p. 240). Nor is it ever possible to understand a case fully or objectively – the complexity of the social world will always exceed that of individual observers and confound simplistic causal explanations. While it is important to try not to misinterpret the local meanings in the case site, it is not possible for a case researcher to capture them without injecting his or her own judgements. Moreover, it is not the case researcher who has the last word in interpreting the case – it is the reader who ultimately decides how the case is received. In the end, the reader is not provided with the truth; the knowledge claims that a researcher can make are much more modest. At best, reading a case represents second-hand 'vicarious experience', from which the reader can draw his or her insights. Given Stake's insistence on the complexity and fundamental unknowability of the social world, it is perhaps not surprising that management researchers have found his advice on case studies less attractive than the concrete procedures and deliverable results promised by Eisenhardt and Yin.

Stake (1995, p. 100) explicitly characterises his position as constructivist: 'No aspects of knowledge are purely of the external world, devoid of human construction'. This means that he provides different recommendations for conducting a case study to

those advocated by Eisenhardt and Yin. His prescriptions for the case study reflect this paradigmatic commitment. Case selection is not guided by theory; the most important consideration is rather to choose a case that provides an opportunity for learning and for extending one's understanding. He endorses the need for validity and for triangulation of one's interpretations and observations, but cautions against the expectation that triangulation can achieve repeatability of these interpretations and observations. Rather, triangulation is important because it can 'clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is being seen' (Stake, 1994, p. 241). He is also sceptical about any form of comparisons, except for comparisons that are made within the boundaries of the case itself such as between departments, temporal time periods or locations. Comparisons across cases inevitably lead to the holism of the case being reduced to the few dimensions along which the case is being compared. Similarly, the quest for causality is an over-simplification of the confluence and inter-relatedness of events that give rise to particular situations.

To conclude, Platt and Stake converge on a very similar set of concerns as do Dyer and Wilkins in their rejoinder to Eisenhardt. They point out that the richness and contextualisation of the case study are a source of theoretical insight. All three critics draw on alternative traditions from which both Eisenhardt and Yin actively distance themselves. However, these critics have made little impression on management researchers. More recently, they have been joined by other voices, drawing on another set of traditions, who have been active in defending the distinctive strengths of the case study.

THE RENAISSANCE OF THE CASE STUDY?

Our (rather optimistic) subheading of a 'renaissance' (for similar optimism, see

Ketokivi & Choi, 2014) reflects a renewed interest in, and a reassessment of, the potential of the case study as a research strategy. Authors with whom we associate this development, notably Charles Ragin, tackle some of the most persistent assumptions and dichotomies that have characterised the use of the case study in management disciplines. In this section, we will profile three insights in particular that we regard as central to the re-evaluation of the case study. The first is the meaningfulness of producing correlational propositions for deductive hypothesis testing and the purpose of arriving at generalisable knowledge; the second, the traditional dichotomy between induction and deduction as approaches to relating theory to data and the distinction between theory-building and theory-testing purposes of the case study. In this way, the new generation of case researchers challenge the notion that case studies are best suited to inductive, exploratory theory-building (as per Eisenhardt, 1989) and argue for an expanded role of the case study in theorising processes. The third consists of the exploration of alternatives to the positivism–constructivism dichotomy. In particular, the turn to critical realism represents a search for how case studies can produce meaningful explanations ‘without laws’, for which context is an essential component.

The Explanatory Strength of Context

One of the most important figures in driving a reassessment of the case study has been the sociologist Charles Ragin, who began writing about case research in the 1980s (see in particular Ragin, 1987). Ragin is gaining recognition in management research as the developer of Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), but fascination with QCA as an analytical tool (with accompanying software) can obscure an appreciation of the premises on which it is based (see Fiss et al., 2013, for an exception). Ragin (1997) argues that the key

difference between the case study and other ‘variable-oriented’ methodologies (whether quantitative or qualitative) is the approach to analysis. In a ‘case-oriented’ analysis, the case is analysed holistically – as a specific combination of conditions producing an outcome – rather than extracting variables from the rest of the case, as would occur when using an experimental design. In the social world, ‘variables’ are not independent, they are conjunctural; that is, their effects depend on the other variables that are present at a particular point in time. A single variable may produce a particular outcome in one case but not in another, depending on the causal conditions. Different combinations of conditions may produce the same or a similar outcome (i.e. equifinality), and the same or similar causes can produce diverse outcomes (multifinality). Understanding why particular outcomes are produced therefore requires taking the full set of relevant conditions into account.

To provide an example (Ragin, 1997): understanding the effect of X on Y across four different cases cannot be achieved by extracting X and Y and conducting a cross-case analysis on the relationship between them. Rather, the relationship between X and Y can only be understood by examining the combinations of conditions in each case. For Ragin, set theory rather than probability theory is the appropriate mathematical logic for explaining causality in the social world. To continue with the example of four cases, the case researcher may conclude that X causes Y only if the conditions A, B and C are also present in the case. If any one of these conditions is absent, at the same time as X is absent, then Z causes Y. In Boolean terms, this can be expressed as:

$$Y = ABCX + ABcXZ + AbCzX + aBCxZ$$

In the equation, the upper case letters denote conditions that are present and lower case letters their absence; addition indicates alternative causal paths (i.e. equifinality) and multiplication the combination of conditions (i.e. causal conjunctures).

The differences between Ragin's case-oriented approach and Eisenhardt's are profound. Rather than extracting away from the context of the case in the analysis in order to propose covariational relationships that can be supported by evidence from multiple cases, the context becomes essential to explanation. That is, the relationship between X and Y cannot be understood without factoring in the other causal conditions which are present. This also means recognising that generalisations will always be limited in scope. While there are certain combinations of conditions that recur relatively frequently, due to the structured nature of the social world, the variations also need to be accounted for. Elsewhere, we have termed this approach to case studies 'contextualised explanation' (Welch et al., 2011).

Unlike Stake (1994), Ragin (2009) is a realist rather than a constructivist. He has not questioned the ability of researchers to be able to view the world objectively, although he does recognise that reality is 'only partially and indirectly accessible through social science' (Ragin, 2009, p. 523). He is agnostic when it comes to the number of cases: while single or small-n case studies are necessary to provide in-depth understanding of causal conditions, he has also demonstrated how case-oriented analysis can be used on large data sets (Ragin, 2009). He is very comfortable with the pursuit of causal explanation, but he insists on a complex view of causality. However, Ragin's commitment to context and to preserving the holism of the case in the analysis does mean that his case-oriented approach shares some important commonalities with Stake's version of the case study. Like Stake, he recognises that it is the holism of the case study that is its distinguishing feature – and its enduring strength.

Abductive Linking of Theory and Data

Eisenhardt's model of knowledge production in Figure 21.1 relies on traditional notions of

induction/theory-building and deduction/theory-testing, as well as the strict separation between theory and observation. Due to the popularisation of the concept of abduction, these dichotomies have been challenged. The process of abductive inference is triggered by a surprising observation that we make. It is surprising because our existing theoretical frames and preconceptions do not seem to offer an adequate explanation for it. Abduction is the process of providing a theoretical explanation for this empirical puzzle. At its best, finding a solution to the puzzle may enable us to construct new theories and concepts. According to this model of inquiry, it is precisely our existing theories and conceptualisations that enable us to be surprised, and to seek an explanation for the observations that do not fit:

As a foundation for inquiry, abduction begins with an unmet expectation and works backward to invent a plausible world or a theory that would make surprise meaningful ... abduction is a continuous process, taking place in all phases of the research process ... What makes for interesting scholarly work is the discontinuity of some (but not all) of the theoretical assumptions of the researcher and the research audience and some (but not all) of the discovered and claimed facts of the matter. (Van Maanen et al., 2007, p. 1149)

Dubois and Gadde (2002, p. 557) describe the abductive approach as a process that often leads to redirecting the study and generating 'a new view of the phenomenon itself'. They emphasise that an abductive approach is not a mix between inductive and deductive, nor is it the same as iteration. They point out that:

[o]ne major difference, as compared with both deductive and inductive studies, is the role of the framework. In studies relying on abduction, the original framework is successively modified, partly as a result of unanticipated empirical findings, but also of theoretical insights gained during the process. (Dubois & Gadde, 2002, p. 559)

While inductivist accounts (such as those found in Eisenhardt) insist on theory-free observation, the abductive process

emphasises the importance of the theoretical starting point. Being able to foster and capitalise on surprises requires an in-depth understanding of existing theories. Prior to entering the field, we need to be familiar with diverse theoretical lenses (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014). This provides us with multiple theoretical resources that allow us to see more than if our observations were guided only by a single theory, to see the limits of existing explanations and to provide us with the theoretical resources for novel explanations.

In a recent reflection piece, Dubois and Gadde (2014, p. 1283) further reinforce the differences between the ‘abductive approach’ and what they term the ‘linear school’ – to which Eisenhardt and Yin belong:

The main difference between the two approaches is their perspective on thickness and deep-probing analysis. Here, we agree with Pentland (1999) ... that the most critical challenge in theorizing is ‘how to move away from surface structure to deep structure’ ... The movement toward deep structures is problematic to achieve in linear and replicative research where research issues, frameworks and case boundaries are formulated at the outset of the study. Discovery of deep structures is more likely to occur in the continuous movements back and forth, involving matching and redirection as in systematic combining and other approaches aiming at context-specific explanations.

The abductive approach cherishes the flexibility of the research design and views redirections of the case study as a source of theoretical insight and learning. This stands in sharp contrast to Yin who, as we have seen, considers the research design as a ‘blueprint’ and for whom deviations from the intended design come only at a high price.

New Philosophical Lenses

In the search for ‘deep structures’, case researchers have been turning to alternative paradigmatic positions. One position that has attracted interest is that of critical realism, a worldview based on the philosophical

writings of Roy Bhaskar. Bhaskar argues that the forms of knowledge production advocated in both positivist and social constructivist traditions constrain our ability to truly understand and explain social phenomena, and thus inhibit the quality of our scientific effort. Bhaskar argues that not only observable facts, but also intangible forces such as false beliefs and illusions, can be causally efficacious and should be included in our explanations. This quest for causality, for discovering and understanding why things are the way they are, does not promise better predictions of the future, given that such predictions are not possible in the open system that is the social world. However, it does promise to be emancipatory, as it exposes false or incomplete understandings and replaces them with better understandings that will inform future action. In recent years, a number of management researchers have sought to articulate the implications of critical realism for social research, including the case study (e.g. Edwards et al., 2014).

Its search for causal explanations – for penetrating the empirical surface to deep structures – has made critical realism attractive to researchers seeking alternatives to the positivist case study. The search for causal explanation, rather than generalisable patterns, necessarily moves beyond what can be observed to why the observed events have occurred. The fact that, in a majority of cases, A leads to B does not explain *why* A leads to B, nor does it explain why this happens in a majority of, but not in all, cases. To explain why there is a correlation between A and B in certain contexts but not in others triggers a search for plausible explanations. This search for plausible explanations – for the ‘why’ that plays no more than a background role in Eisenhardt’s template – calls for the acknowledgement of both visible and unobservable forces (e.g. illusions, ideas, desires), as well as context, as important explanatory factors of the world around us. The search for causes requires an ‘intensive’ case study (Sayer, 1992) that can penetrate beyond surface-level

empirical patterns. That is, rich detail is necessary in order to establish a plausible causal explanation.

Critical realism also acknowledges the fallibility of the human observer, who cannot directly see all the causal mechanisms at work. In this way, it acknowledges the interpretive dilemmas recognised by constructivists such as Stake. Moreover, while a critical realist maintains a commitment to causal explanations, the conception of causality is not the over-simplified linear kind dismissed by Stake. Causality therefore takes on new meaning, rather than the regularity model favoured by the positivist account. There are consequently more intersections between various critics of the positivist case study than first appears.

AN ALTERNATIVE STARTING POINT

So, for those seeking an introduction to the case study reflecting these new insights, where can they turn, if it is not to Eisenhardt or Yin? In a slim volume, Thomas and Myers (2015) provide a useful reflection of recent thinking about the case study that can be used as a yardstick for measuring how much methodological thinking has changed since the 1980s (see also Thomas, 2011). They explain that they chose the title of the book because they wanted to dissect the ‘vital organs’ of the case study ‘and how they work together’ (p. 1). They identify the core strength and distinctiveness of the case study as tackling the complexity of the social world by dealing with phenomena holistically. That is to say, the case study road to theory development lies in understanding parts in relation to the whole, not in breaking the whole into a set of parts. Understanding in the face of the complexity and unpredictability of the social world involves questioning and probing, tracing the sequence of events, understanding the particular and comparing the case to other situations by

using techniques such as analogies and counterfactuals. Above all, it is about abduction rather than induction: of solving empirical puzzles.

Unlike Eisenhardt or Yin, Thomas and Myers (2015) do not accept that the objective of the case study – or the social sciences more broadly – should be generalisation, or that generalisation is the only valid form of scientific knowledge. Instead, they follow Bent Flyvbjerg (2001) by arguing that social science is about knowledge gained through experience (*phronesis*): knowledge which is about, and which is gained from, a particular context and transferred to other contexts. Social knowledge is inherently context-bound, so the scope for generalities about the social world is inherently limited. They therefore provide a very different justification for the case study than Eisenhardt (and those who follow her approach), who justify the case study in terms of its role in generating context-free knowledge.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have mapped the key developments of the case study in management disciplines since the 1980s, when Eisenhardt and Yin published their influential methodological texts. We believe that it is very exciting to be a qualitative case researcher today, given how the case study is currently being revived and rediscovered. Over the past few years, a large number of new methodological articles and books (such as this one) have been published that seek to re-evaluate and extend the potential of the case study. Moreover, journals in a variety of disciplines are actively inviting scholars to engage in methodological debates through dedicated sections (e.g. *British Journal of Management*, *Industrial Marketing Management* and the *European Management Review*) and special issues (e.g. *Journal of International Business Studies*).

Since the 1980s, new generations of scholars have revisited the case study and provided us with the intellectual resources, concepts and approaches necessary to apply the case study in keeping with the way in which it is defined: the in-depth investigation of a phenomenon in its context. Their contributions allow us to rethink existing dichotomies – such as positivism versus constructionism, induction versus deduction, generalities versus particularities and qualitative versus quantitative – that are so persistent and hard to change. We need to replace these dichotomies with a new mindset and vocabulary, such as case-oriented analysis, abduction, deep structures and unobservables.

Rethinking the case study can make it a much more powerful, and more diverse, methodological approach. The reward for moving beyond the positivist legacy of Eisenhardt and Yin may well be more innovative theory, developed to explain surprises encountered in the field and going beyond empirical patterns to the causes underlying them. The recent literature on the case study that we have reviewed in this chapter very much values and encourages the unforeseen findings that we make in the course of our research, rather than fearing these insights as a breach of the systematic blueprint required to ensure rigour. If the next edition of this *Handbook* devotes an entire section to the case study, we will know that the renaissance of the case study is truly underway in the management field.

REFERENCES

- Cook, T.D., & Campbell, D.T. (1979) *Quasi Experimentation: Design & Analysis Issues for Field Settings*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Duberley, J., Johnson, P., & Cassell, C. (2012) 'Philosophies underpinning qualitative research', in G. Symon & C. Cassell (eds), *Qualitative Organizational Research: Core Methods and Current Challenges*. London: Sage, pp. 15–34.
- Dubois, A., & Gadde, L.-E. (2002) 'Systematic combining: An abductive approach to case research', *Journal of Business Research*, 55(7): 553–60.
- Dubois, A., & Gadde, L.-E. (2014) "'Systematic combining" – A decade later', *Journal of Business Research*, 67(6): 1277–84.
- Dyer, W.G. Jr., & Wilkins, A.L. (1991) 'Better stories, not better constructs, to generate better theory: A rejoinder to Eisenhardt', *The Academy of Management Review*, 16(3): 613–19.
- Edwards, P.K., O'Mahoney, J., & Vincent, S. (eds) (2014) *Studying Organizations Using Critical Realism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989) 'Building theories from case study research', *Academy of Management Review*, 50(1): 25–32.
- Eisenhardt, K.M. (1991) 'Better stories and better constructs: The case for rigor and comparative logic', *Academy of Management Review*, 16(3): 620–7.
- Eisenhardt, K.M., & Bourgeois, L.J. (1988) 'Politics of strategic decision making in high-velocity environments: Toward a midrange theory', *Academy of Management Journal*, 31(4): 737–70.
- Eisenhardt, K.M., & Graebner, M.E. (2007) 'Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges', *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(1): 25–32.
- Fiss, P.C., Cambré, B., & Marx, A. (eds) (2013) *Configurational Theory and Methods in Organizational Research*, *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, Vol. 38, 1–22.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2001) *Making Social Science Matter*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Glaser, B.G., & Strauss, A.L. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine Press.
- Hartley, J. (2004) 'Case study research', in C. Cassell & G. Symon (eds), *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*. London: Sage, pp. 323–33.
- Ketokivi, M., & Choi, T. (2014) 'Renaissance of case research as a scientific method', *Journal of Operations Management*, 32(5): 232–40.
- Lee, A.S. (1989) 'Case studies as natural experiments', *Human Relations*, 42(2): 117–37.
- Miles, M.B. (1979) 'Qualitative data as an attractive nuisance: The problem of analysis', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24(4): 590–601.

- Mir, R. (2011) 'Blurring the boundaries between case research and ethnography: Reflections on research in multinational corporations', in R. Piekkari & C. Welch (eds), *Rethinking the Case Study in International Business and Management Research*. London: Edward Elgar Press, pp. 301–22.
- Moore, F. (2011) 'On a clear day you can see forever: Taking a holistic approach to ethnographic case studies in international business', in R. Piekkari & C. Welch (eds), *Rethinking the Case Study in International Business and Management Research*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, pp. 323–41.
- Pentland, B. (1999) 'Building process theory with narrative: From description to explanation', *Academy of Management Review*, 24(4): 711–24.
- Piekkari, R., & Welch, C. (eds) (2011) *Rethinking the Case Study in International Business and Management Research*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Piekkari, R., Welch, C., & Paavilainen, E. (2009) 'The case study as disciplinary convention: Evidence from international business journals', *Organizational Research Methods*, 12(3): 567–89.
- Platt, J. (1992) 'Case study in American methodological thought', *Current Sociology*, 40(1): 17–48.
- Prasad, A., & Prasad, P. (2002) 'The coming of age of interpretive organizational research', *Organizational Research Methods*, 5(1): 4–11.
- Prasad, P. (2005) *Crafting Qualitative Research: Working in the Postpositivist Traditions*. Armonk: M. E. Sharpe.
- Ragin, C.C. (1987) *The Comparative Method: Moving beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Ragin, C.C. (1997) 'Turning the tables: How case-oriented research challenges variable-oriented research', *Comparative Social Research*, 16(1): 27–42.
- Ragin, C.C. (2009) 'Reflections on casing and case-oriented research', in D. Byrne & C.C. Ragin (eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Case-Based Methods*. London: Sage, pp. 522–34.
- Sayer, A. (1992) *Method in Social Science: A Realist Approach*, 2nd edn. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Stake, R.E. (1994) 'Case studies', in N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 236–47.
- Stake, R.E. (1995) *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Symon, G., & Cassell, C. (eds) (2012) *Qualitative Organizational Research: Core Methods and Current Challenges*. London: Sage.
- Tavory, I., & Timmermans, S. (2014) *Abductive Analysis: Theorizing Qualitative Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Thomas, G. (2011) *How to Do Your Case Study: A Guide for Students and Researchers*. London: Sage.
- Thomas, G., & Myers, K. (2015) *The Anatomy of the Case Study*. London: Sage.
- Van Maanen, J. (1979) 'Reclaiming qualitative methods for organizational research', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24(4): 520–9.
- Van Maanen, J., Sørensen, J.B., & Mitchell, T.R. (2007) 'The interplay between theory and method', *Academy of Management Review*, 32(4): 1145–54.
- Welch, C., Piekkari, R., Plakoyiannaki, E., & Paavilainen-Mäntymäki, E. (2011) 'Theorising from case studies: Towards a pluralist future for international business research', *Journal of International Business Studies*, 42(5): 740–62.
- Welch, C., Plakoyiannaki, E., Piekkari, R., & Paavilainen-Mäntymäki, E. (2013) 'Legitimizing diverse uses of qualitative research: A rhetorical analysis of two management journals', *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15(2): 245–64.
- Wolcott, H.F. (2002) 'Writing up qualitative research ... better', *Qualitative Health Research*, 12(1): 91–103.
- Yin, R.K. (1981) 'The case study crisis: Some answers', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 26(1): 58–65.
- Yin, R.K. (1984) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Yin, R.K. (2009) *Case Study Research*. 4th edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yin, R.K. (2014) *Case Study Research*. 5th edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

PART III

The Researcher



This page intentionally left blank

Achieving Critical Distance

Simon Hayward and Catherine Cassell

INTRODUCTION

The role of the researcher and their impact upon knowledge production has long been an area of interest within business and management research traditions and particularly those informed by qualitative approaches (Cassell & Symon, 1994). As qualitative researchers we see ourselves as an integral part of the management research world we study and will therefore have an impact upon that world and the phenomena we are interested in. Qualitative researchers in the field have explored the challenges this generates from a range of perspectives. Examples include traditions in which the researcher's role is actively accounted for, such as action research and ethnography (Cassell & Johnson, 2006; Van Maanen, 2011), as well as encouraging researchers to critique and understand their role and impact through reflexive practices (Johnson & Duberley, 2003). In this chapter we explore some of the issues facing researchers in the management

and organisation field in maintaining a critical distance within the research process in situations where getting close to the subject can provide deeper and richer data and subsequent insight into management practice. The challenge here is that we want our research outcomes to be trustworthy, so that other academics and practitioners can use them with confidence. However, there are situations where distance can be a challenge, for example when gaining access to research opportunities through known contacts; when interviewing the same people repeatedly in the case of longitudinal research so that relationships develop over time; when the researcher is a member of or a consultant to the research organisation; or when the researcher is sponsored by a senior stakeholder in the organisation.

In addressing issues of an appropriate or critical distance we recognise that the extent to which this can be seen as problematic relates to the philosophical assumptions underpinning the research. From a positivist

perspective, for example, the assumption is that the researcher is an objective neutral who will have no impact on the research process, whereas the notion of distance, or maintaining some distance, may be meaningless in other traditions, such as social constructionism for example, where separating researcher from the researched contradicts the whole notion of the co-production of knowledge. We also recognise that other chapters in this book, for example the one on reflexivity (Chapter 23), will also provide insights into this issue.

In what follows we question how critical distance can be achieved. We start by defining what we mean by critical distance and why it is important. We then suggest that an understanding of critical distance and the choices that researchers face at different points of the research process both require an understanding of three key features of the research endeavour: philosophical perspective, context and relationships. We explore these three areas and illustrate the different choices available to the researcher by using examples from our own research practice. We then discuss some of the tools and techniques that can facilitate the achievement of critical distance before making some concluding comments.

CRITICAL DISTANCE

In using the term critical distance, we are assuming that there is some separation between the researcher and the researched and that that separation has a critical purpose. Here we are using the term critical in two ways: first, meaning something of importance and second, as involving some kind of reflection. However, our contention is that the researcher and the researched can never be completely separate, therefore understanding separation and distance within the research process is something that needs to be managed.

Why is critical distance worthy of discussion? First, as researchers we are

influencing the research in some way by our very involvement. Our actions of observation, conducting interviews, and so on, have an influence on the research situation. As Chau and Witcher (2005: 351) suggest, the proximity of researchers and practitioners is influential: 'In general, the very fact of closeness means that a relationship has a power of its own', so researchers are active participants in creating what they observe. In this way we are in the process of co-constructing research data. Secondly, as researchers we are likely to experience a subjective response in the data gathering process, which is essentially a human interaction. Organisations are human systems, and the management of these organisations is therefore an act of human interaction, and the act of research into organisations and management also involves human interaction between the researcher and the researched. It is important to reflect upon our responses and the consequences of them for how we make sense of our research data.

In what can become a multiplicity of interactions, the researcher's ability to retain a degree of critical distance is, we would argue, a useful requirement for the trustworthiness of their research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). There is also considerable value in accepting and engaging with the subjectivity involved, because it can help provide us as researchers with rich data and a more nuanced sense of meaning. Flyvbjerg (2006) captures this well in his discussion of case study research. When reviewing the 'summarizing and generalization' of scientific research he quotes Nietzsche: "Above all," Nietzsche said about doing science, "one should not wish to divest existence of its rich ambiguity" (Flyvbjerg, 2006: 219). Maintaining critical distance is a way to avoid the risk of divesting existence in this way whilst retaining research integrity. By exploring and making sense of the researcher's role we avoid the risk of losing such rich ambiguity.

A helpful way to categorise the dynamics between the researcher and the researched in

terms of identity and role is provided by the contribution of Cunliffe and Karunanayake (2013: 365), who state that ‘data collection is a human activity in which relationships emerge that may influence research in significant ways’. They describe four hyphen-spaces in which we conduct our research, with particular emphasis on ethnography but applicable, we believe, in a wider management research context. They describe the hyphen-spaces as ‘insiderness-outsiderness’, ‘sameness-difference’, ‘engagement-distance’, and ‘political activism–active neutrality’ (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013: 370). These hyphen-spaces capture the multiple possibilities researchers have to make sense of the position they are occupying during their research in the field, enabling us to calibrate in a more conscious way the interaction between our identity and that of our research respondents. ‘Insiderness-outsiderness’ describes whether we are ‘indigenous to the community being studied’ and whether the researcher is ‘perceived ... as “one of us”’, i.e. an ‘insider’ (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013: 372). In terms of critical distance, this hyphen-space helps us to recognise the way in which we are perceived by the respondents, and therefore how trusting they are in disclosing the data which we seek to hear and understand. This is related to ‘sameness-difference’, which describes to what extent we are like our respondents (such as gender, ethnicity, culture and values), which can influence their level and rate of acceptance and therefore trust in us as recipients for their narrative.

‘Engagement-distance’ describes the extent of the researcher’s involvement with the respondents in terms of physical activity, emotional involvement and the degree of co-creation that is happening in the data gathering and sensemaking processes (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013: 372). This is particularly relevant to research methods such as ethnography and action research, which suggest a high degree of involvement with the community being researched, but also has relevance to other methods such as

longitudinal case studies where increasing engagement is a possible consequence of in-depth and repeated contact with respondents. The last hyphen-space is ‘political activism–active neutrality’, which refers to ‘the politics of positionality’ and whether the researcher is ‘involved in the agendas of the respondents’ (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013: 380). These last two spaces are more at the discretion of the researcher, we believe, as they are less dependent on predetermined factors such as being indigenous or religiously similar to the researched agents. In the case of action research, the researcher will typically be ‘oriented towards social/organizational change’ or intervention (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013: 372). Whilst movement within each hyphen is possible, it is in these latter two that critical distance is more likely to be a conscious act by the researcher as they decide to become more engaged or politically active with the respondents.

Cunliffe and Karunanayake make the point that the researcher and the respondent’s positions in all four spaces may vary over time: ‘we suggest that researcher–respondent relationships are often emergent (Hastings, 2010), multiple, and agentic in the sense that researchers and respondents shape each others’ identities and actions’ (2013: 365). This highlights a potential issue in comparing longitudinal data which may have been collected at times of differing degrees of distance. The researcher’s reflexive account of this variation therefore becomes particularly important when conducting longitudinal research. Overall, the hyphen-space construct provides a helpful way to make sense of the relationship between researcher and researched, and to track changes in it over time. In this way we can describe critical distance with a shared language and meaning.

In understanding critical distance, our argument is that the research process can be characterised by three key features: philosophical framework, context and relationships. We now address each of these in turn.

PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK

The extent to which the distance of the researcher is seen as a critical issue is impacted by the philosophical tradition within which the research is conducted. There is considerable diversity in the different methods and methodological perspectives available to the researcher seeking to access the organisational world qualitatively. As Cunliffe (2011) highlights, 'Our metatheoretical assumptions have very practical consequences for the way we do research in terms of our topic, focus of study, what we see as "data", how we collect and analyse the data, how we theorize, and how we write up our research account' (pp. 3–5). This is particularly the case for how we consider the role of the qualitative researcher. As Duberley et al. (2012) highlight, the development of management and organisational research has been characterised by the domination of positivism as an underlying philosophy. Here, the aim is to produce generalisable knowledge through testing of hypothetical predictions deduced from a priori theory where the role of the researcher is one of neutral observer. Therefore, we would expect that the researcher does not impact upon the research process and an appropriate objective distance is assumed. Hence, maintaining some form of critical distance would not be an issue if working in this tradition. For researchers approaching qualitative research from other traditions, however, the role of the researcher in knowledge production is actively recognised and accounted for. If a researcher is analysing discourse from a constructionist perspective, for example, they will reflect upon their role and impact in the context within which the data is generated.

There is not the space here to review a wide range of philosophical approaches, but we now turn to look briefly at two particular traditions where the role of the researcher in how research is conducted has been centrally positioned and critiqued: ethnography and action research.

Ethnography

If our research is to be trustworthy it is helpful to demonstrate a level of neutrality, which is also characteristic of some ethnographic work, particularly that informed by traditional approaches. Indeed, it was a classic ethnographer, Bronisław Malinowski, who argued that 'ethnography's peculiar character is the production of ostensibly "scientific" and "objective" knowledge based on personal interaction and subjective experience' (cited in Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006: 261). Thus what is 'out there' is presumed to be independent of the knower and is accessible to the trained observer or ethnographer following the correct procedures. Here the threats to that neutrality, such as 'engagement' and 'political activism' (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013: 377–81) for example, are seen as potential traps for the researcher to fall into that should be avoided on all counts.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) advise that ethnographers should critically scrutinise the impact of their field role upon a research setting as a form of internal reflexivity with a view to reducing any contamination which may threaten the ecological validity of the research. So here again the researcher is striving for distance, though there is some recognition that they will inevitably influence the research, hence the need to be aware of that impact. Ways of enhancing distance in the analytic process are to avoid over-rapport with the informants in an organisation; to treat the setting as anthropologically strange; to retain the balance between the roles of cultural insider and outsider; and to retain social and intellectual distance to preserve analytic space. This is evidence of a different philosophical approach informed by some of the commitments of positivism whilst recognising some subjectivity in interpretation.

What characterises most contemporary ethnography, however, is the recognition that there are diverse ways of conducting research which position the researcher and

their distance or closeness in different ways. Indeed, the complex nature of the issues relating to distance in organisational ethnographic research has been well documented (e.g. Yanow et al., 2012: 335). Van Maanen (2011), in his classic ethnographic text *Tales of the Field*, positions the researcher's role in terms of different sets of tales. It is the telling of the tales that impacts upon how distance is understood. For example, in *realist tales* the researcher is positioned as having experiential authority assuming an interpretive omnipotence to tell the study from the native's point of view. In *confessional tales*, the authority becomes more personalised and focused upon the fieldworker's interpretation or point of view. *Impressionist tales* focus upon fragmented knowledge and textual identity. Here the researcher is recognised to be integrally linked to the story produced, and separating out their role or an assumption of distance would be philosophically meaningless. Van Maanen also identifies other types of tale such as those that are critical, formal, literary or jointly told; the key point here is that the notion of distance is different depending on the style of the tale told.

Action Research

Another tradition where the role of the researcher is often critiqued is action research. A defining characteristic of action research is that the researcher also impacts upon the research process by taking action as a result of what they learn from their research. Action research has a long history within management and organisational research. It is usually traced back to Kurt Lewin's application of experimental logic and social psychological theory to practical social problems during the Second World War. Lewin (1951) was determined that research should have an impact on the practical social problems of the day and therefore coined the term 'action research' to highlight an iterative process of research and action. Since then the term has

been used in increasingly diverse ways, and different views of action research abound within the literature (Cassell & Johnson, 2006). Action research is usually seen as an iterative cycle of problem identification, diagnosis, planning, intervention and evaluation of the results of action in order to learn and plan subsequent interventions. The researcher is seen to play an active role in all of these stages, though again the philosophical position of the action researcher will impact upon how distant or otherwise they are seen to be. For example, experimentally based action research is underpinned by positivist assumptions where the researcher is a distant neutral observer, whereas more participative approaches place more emphasis on collaboration between the researcher and managers and other organisation members, as Eden and Huxham (1996) highlight. This may involve the joint identification of a problem that needs solving and the participation of a range of different organisation members at various stages of the research and action processes. Cassell and Johnson (2006) highlight that the range of different philosophical traditions in which action research is located includes experimental, inductive, constructive and participative approaches.

In summary, even in qualitative research traditions where a critique of the researcher's role is at the forefront of the research design, the critical distance or otherwise that the researcher maintains from the research is informed by their philosophical assumptions.

THE CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCHER'S ROLE

Apart from philosophical assumptions, key facets of distance emerge from the context within which the researcher's role is constructed and understood. Qualitative researchers have long been aware of the importance of having an understanding of context to enable access to the rich ambiguity around

social research noted earlier. Recognising the significance of context is an important part of maintaining critical distance in organisational and management research. It is helpful here to consider the researcher's role from a contextualist perspective. Contextualism provides a pragmatic view of knowledge, with justification dependent on the standards relevant in each context, which in the social research world is multi-faceted and based in part on the interaction, dialogue and perceptions of the people in the organisation (Feldman, 2010: 12).

For example, it can be helpful for us to understand how different agents perceive the same event differently, often motivated by the way it impacts upon their personal situations. In a case study research project about distributed leadership that Simon (Hayward) conducted, for example, there was a significant shift towards a more collaborative governance model in one of the cases. One senior manager in that case saw the move towards a more collaborative approach as a reduction in their level of independence, whereas another manager saw it as an opportunity to be more successful by working with others across the business more closely. Context was an important factor in how each agent interpreted events happening around them. There are some distinctive contexts that are worthy of note here – where, for example, the researcher is researching their own organisation, or acting as a consultant. We now consider each of these in turn.

Researcher as Employee

Where the researcher has a separate 'insider' role in the research organisation, critical distance is a potential area of conflict. Such situations have become more frequent with the growth of the DBA (Doctor of Business Administration) programme in contemporary Business Schools, where the doctoral researcher is often also a practising manager. Tietze (2012) highlights the issue of closeness

and distance in these scenarios: 'Researchers are "situated", i.e. they will bring a particular socio-political, historical, gendered, generational, ethnic and racial background to their research projects' (Tietze, 2012: 54).

Tietze (2012) describes how working in one's own organisation creates for the researcher a particular closeness and an ability to understand. In terms of legitimising such an approach, she points out that: 'Work by scholars such as Becker (1967) and Berger and Luckman (1966) had contributed to the dismantling of "impartiality" and "objective neutrality" as the only basis for investigating the social world' (Tietze, 2012: 55). From this perspective, the insider has a unique insight into their organisational world which can aid the research effort, and the partiality of the account is something that can be critiqued and reported upon.

Whatever the philosophical standpoint, the employee researcher has a dependence on the employer for livelihood, and this introduces a more deep-seated issue relating to distance in that the researcher has an underlying interest in maintaining a positive relationship with the organisation. This has the potential to create conflicts of interest for the researcher (such as when research findings are critical of the established hierarchy) which need to be made explicit and dealt with effectively, for example through robust peer and supervisor challenge and review.

Researcher as Consultant

When the researcher is a consultant to an organisation involved in fieldwork, it raises some related but subtly different issues of distance. The risk of a conflict of interest is still present, but the relationship is less dependent in that the consultant is typically not reliant on one client organisation for their livelihood. Having said that, for the consultant there are issues such as the tension between professional and commercial interests: when the research findings are critical

of the established hierarchy, as above, the consultant has a responsibility to 'tell the truth' while at the same time there is a commercial risk of being rejected by the client organisation. For the consultant there is also the possible perception inside the organisation that they are using research for commercial ends. Simon has experienced both cases as researcher consultant and has found that there are certain tactics that help to maintain both the substance and appearance of distance with the client organisation. The first tactic is to signal a clear difference between interactions with people in the organisation as a researcher and as a consultant, through using different days, different diary management practices, dressing differently, using props such as audio recorders for research interviews, and so on. Second, these signals can then be reinforced by making the different purpose of meetings or interviews explicit at the outset, making it clear in what guise the researcher is present. The third tactic is to review the nature of the research process regularly with key stakeholders in the organisation in order to check for any feedback or perceptions of inadequate distance, and to review and challenge the data itself.

Researcher Identity

Apart from the clear role positions that a researcher may have, such as consultant or employee, all researchers are in the position of handling identity in the field (Brewer, 2004; Simpson et al., 2014). The researcher may seek to construct a particular identity but this is also influenced by how the research participants understand and make sense of the researcher's role. In a positivist tradition this may be the role of the distant and objective researcher, but such distance may be challenged by the research participants. One way to consider this in terms of critical distance is to focus upon the performative aspects of the research and the 'identity work' that both researchers and research participants,

interviewers and interviewees do as part of the research process (Cassell, 2005). Identity work as defined by Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) can be seen as a set of active processes which serve to construct a sense of identity. Here we are not seeing identity as something static but rather as an ongoing process, hence the focus turns to understanding how research entails identity work by both the interviewer and the interviewee.

In a previous paper, Catherine (Cassell) outlined a number of different type of identities she believed she and her interviewees had co-constructed for a variety of different reasons, each requiring identity work to sustain or challenge (Cassell, 2005). Other researchers have also noted and discussed how identity can be handled in the field; for example, Brewer's ethnographic work with the Royal Ulster Constabulary (2004). Our argument here is that research context and identity are interlinked, which clearly impacts upon critical distance.

RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships within the field are crucial for the qualitative management researcher. The depth of relationship management researchers have with their participants clearly varies, from the anonymous questionnaire respondent to the ethnographic familiarity of the embedded co-worker. Across this spectrum, we need to be conscious of the impact we are having through how we set up and manage the interactions with research participants, and the influence that has on the data we derive from the process. For example, if we use a formal tone in an introductory email requesting a response to a questionnaire, we are framing the data collection process as a formal activity in the mind of the respondent, which may cause them to respond in a more superficial way than if we had set it up with a personal conversation. Hence there are a range of complexities associated with field

relationships, in particular issues relating to access, sponsorship and the different levels of the organisation where we work, which we now explore.

Gaining Access

Feldman, Bell and Berger (2003) present a general theory of organisational access that recognises it as a way of building relationships. In arguing that access is a relational process, they draw attention to the importance of the relationship between the researcher and the researched.

Gaining access to organisations and individuals can be a challenging aspect of management research. If we can achieve high quality access to a research organisation we are, we would suggest, more likely to gain high quality data. In the situation where our access is achieved through a senior figure in the organisation we are likely to have the benefit of wider access to data gathering opportunities by dint of the individual's influence. On the other hand, we need to recognise that this access point may bring with it certain assumptions from others in the organisation. In our experience, these assumptions can be unhelpful to our research activity, and have ranged from suspicion of our motives and those of the senior figure, an initial lack of confidence that confidentiality would be maintained and a perception that participation is not really voluntary. On the other hand, we have also experienced assumptions that can be helpful, such as that this research is important to the organisation and therefore worth investing time in being part of, and assumed credibility for us as researchers.

It can be helpful in managing these varied assumptions to raise awareness of them at the outset and to review them during the research activity. Raising awareness can be in various forms, including reflexively, exploring the way this is affecting the participants and how they may be responding to involvement in the research. It can be with one's peers (or

supervisors in the case of doctoral research), to talk through the dynamics that access has created, and to highlight possible alternative explanations of response. It can also be with the organisational members themselves, such as with interviewees, or with a trusted observer. In one example from Simon's work this was a senior executive in a particular case who was aware of the research activity but not directly involved, and whose experience was helpful in making sense of the possible distortions the access point might create.

The development of trust within research relationships needs considerable work. As Brewer (2004: 316) suggests in relation to ethnography: 'Ethnographers are viewed differently as a relationship is built up and trust developed. This bond of trust is premised on the same qualities people bring to all social relationships – honesty, friendliness, reciprocity, openness, communication and confidence building. Trust is rarely instantaneous and normally builds slowly'. Brewer continues by highlighting that in his work with the Royal Ulster Constabulary he realised that the level of trust was not something that was a one-off assessment at the point of access. Rather, it needed to be worked at with reassurances constantly given. Hence the maintenance of relationships within the field also needs ongoing commitment and nurturance.

Dimensions of Sponsorship

The issue of access may be related to the issue of sponsorship, in that the point of access may also be the sponsor of our research activities. Whether or not this is the case, the sponsor or sponsors of our research are likely to influence how our research is perceived by research participants. If a sponsor is from a particular function, this may position the research activity as being functionally oriented. In one case involved in Simon's research, for example, the human resource director was a sponsor and this led some interviewees to perceive the research as 'an HR initiative', which in turn

caused some to use phrases such as ‘this HR stuff’. In the interview context he therefore asked questions to explore the wider organisational position, but was conscious of the risk of the data being skewed by interviewee assumptions that this was a human resource-related topic.

The sponsor may also affect the level and type of disclosure provided by research participants. Simon found some managers he interviewed were initially wary of disclosing what they perceived to be less positive aspects of the culture and ways of working across the organisation because they either did not want to ‘let the sponsor down’ by revealing weaknesses or they were wary of the repercussions for themselves if they were seen to be critical of the organisation. We will discuss the importance of dialogue in getting beyond these participant reservations later in the chapter.

Another source of potential influence from having strong sponsorship is the impact upon the researcher’s own perceptions. The researcher’s relationship with the sponsor or sponsors is likely to have a significant influence on the way the research is set up, and through this the sponsor’s own views will be a source of insight. For the researcher it is helpful to keep these views in perspective, and to avoid the risk of treating the sponsor’s views as more important than other sets of data.

Having strong sponsorship can be helpful in maintaining access during the research activity, especially with longitudinal research where it can be more challenging to gain repeated access over time. Simon found that having more than one sponsor in each research organisation was helpful in being able to continue with data collection over time, reducing the risk that a single sponsor might lose interest in the research, move to a new role or even depart the organisation.

Sponsors can be helpful reviewers of data analysis, providing a commentary on the way the researcher is making sense of the data and adding further detail where it might be missing from the data set. In one case where

Simon had several sponsors he was able to gain a different perspective from each of them, which helped to identify possible areas of conflict in the analysis, as well as developing a deeper appreciation of, for example, the historical context of the organisation and how previous executives had influenced the current way management decision making played out in practice. The insight is ‘locally grounded’, with a ‘richness and holism’ that allows us to move from the micro to the macro and back so that we understand how agents are interacting within the context of the case itself (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 10).

Relationship Mapping

In the situation where data collection involves people from different levels of an organisation, there are potential issues relating to distance due to varying degrees of history and closeness, both at the beginning of the research and as these relationships evolve over time. It is helpful to map out the relationships one is going to develop during the course of data collection at the beginning of the research and then to review this at regular stages to identify where there are potential or actual issues regarding distance. For example, in one of Simon’s cases he had an existing relationship with the key sponsor, who was also the chief executive, and with some members of the executive team. In a second case, he had existing relationships with various people in one of the operating units in the organisation. In both instances these relationships were helpful in providing access as well as an accelerated level of understanding of the cases as organisations. But there was also the risk of these preconceived views creating a skewed or one-dimensional perspective about the case and therefore being unhelpful in the overall research activity. Simon therefore found it helpful to check with peers and his supervisor on a regular basis to manage the influence of these closer relationships and to support a more balanced

approach to all relationships in each case (Yanow et al, 2012: 344).

In terms of the way relationships develop over time, particularly when the research is longitudinal in nature, there is both benefit and risk associated with deepening relationships between researcher and participant. In a repeated sequence of interviews, for example, Simon found that people were increasingly willing to disclose more personal information and to discuss its meaning in context in second or third interviews. This has the benefit of deepening the richness of the data, supporting what Lee calls the 'benefits of the particular' (Lee et al., 2007: 172). Given that access is relational, it is important that relationships within a research setting are nurtured and cared for. One consequence of this is how it influences the situation when you are telling the sponsor what they might perceive to be 'difficult' research results. In one case in which Catherine was involved, for example, the research was looking at engagement within a large public sector organisation. The study had been sponsored by the chief executive, who was keen to understand the impact of a cultural change programme he and the Board had initiated. Some of the results from the qualitative interviews were potentially sensitive and critical of the senior team. In order to deal with that feedback, Catherine stressed to the chief executive that as he was the sponsor of the research these were useful findings for him to consider which did not need to be shared elsewhere. The research relationship was with him as an individual rather than with the organisation. This reassurance meant that he felt more comfortable with the results, which led to him discussing them with the senior team and then commissioning another piece of research that focused upon the organisation more widely.

Leaving the Field

In theory, the ultimate distance is put between the researcher and the researched when the researcher leaves the field. Traditionally there

has been far more consideration within the management and organisation research field about how research sites are accessed rather than how they are left. However, increasingly within the literature, issues to do with how fieldwork is concluded and relationships potentially ended are now more widely considered (e.g. Michailova et al., 2014). Michailova et al., in taking a relational approach, highlight how there may be a number of emotions associated with exit. It is evident that the nature of exit is important in terms of consequent relationships. In particular, where the researcher is an employee or a consultant, they may leave the research role, but they remain in the site of fieldwork. Whether there is an ongoing relationship with the field of research or not, as with any stage in the field, the end of a project and the relationships associated with it need to be managed with due care and attention. An elegant exit leaves a positive point of closure, which is in itself part of conducting effective research, and the opportunity for re-entry at a later date should this be of potential interest to either party.

TOOLS FOR FACILITATING CRITICAL DISTANCE

In this section we outline some of the tools and techniques that researchers have used to promote critical distance. These include methodological tools, the use of quality criteria, reflexivity, keeping a research diary and peer review.

Methodological Tools

The methodological choices made within a project clearly impact upon distance. Some methods enable a particular closeness to the researched, such as the interview, whereas others, such as document analysis, enable a clear distance. In qualitative management research interviewers often seek to develop

an environment in which the interviewee feels comfortable to disclose and explore content that is potentially risky or controversial for the individual to discuss, such as managerial practices, quality issues, or organisational climate. The notion of developing rapport is seen as an important skill for the interviewer (Cassell, 2005), which is interesting in that here we are seeking ways of enhancing physical and emotional proximity. In our experience, the interviewer is providing an opportunity for people to make sense 'out of the process of interaction' (Weick, 1995: 20). An interview is a retrospective process, and one in which the interviewee is in some way fulfilling a need to look back and make sense, possibly oversimplifying to help the process (Weick, 1995: 17). As researchers, we need to build rapport and create an environment where the interviewee feels safe to disclose and explore the research questions in sufficient depth to draw out the nuances of meaning that give us the richness we seek. In longitudinal research we have the added advantage of being able to build that rapport and resulting trust over repeated interviews, which can provide further depth to the data collection process. The more we can create quality dialogue, the more we are likely to draw out the data that gives us a more comprehensive understanding of the situation under review. As Isaac wrote, 'human beings create, refine and share knowledge through conversation' (Isaac, 1999: 2). Hence, here we are arguing that paradoxically the critical distance required can be enabled by methods such as interviews that facilitate a closeness or proximity to our data and participants.

There are other ways in which critical distance can be located within the methodological choices that researchers make. For example, multiple sources of data can help to ensure that data from certain key relationships is not given undue emphasis. Rather, the insights garnered can be located within the context informed by data generated by other research participants. For example, within Simon's case study

research two populations were interviewed twice. This, plus observation of key meetings and document analysis, enabled him to draw on different sources of data, method and data type to corroborate or challenge research conclusions. Simon also weighted the evidence by using only direct or published sources and by spreading the interview sampling sufficiently widely across the potential audience in each case. Other methods, like discourse analysis for example, explicitly expect the researcher to account for their role and impact in the generation of the data and analysis. Hence some form of critical reflection of the researcher's role is embedded in such methods.

The Use of Quality Criteria

Within the field of qualitative research more generally, there is an increasing application of quality criteria. In discussing quality criteria, we acknowledge that they have been used in a variety of different ways within the literature. Symon and Cassell (2012) highlight that such criteria can be universal, in that they apply to all types of qualitative research, or methodological, in that they apply to specific methods such as interviewing or ethnography, for example.

A number of different criteria posited relate to critical distance. The aim is that through the use of a range of criteria we are able to describe the way we have maintained a level of distance – if philosophically appropriate, see Johnson et al. (2006) – whilst being involved in the organisational system we are researching. This is in line with the advice of Symon and Cassell (2012) that, given the diversity of qualitative research, 'qualitative researchers should draw on those elements of quality that they think are most relevant to their own research and be careful in their writings to indicate to potential assessors what the aims of the research were and therefore how they should be judged' (Symon & Cassell, 2012: 221).

By way of illustration, Johnson et al. (2006) outline a range of different quality

criteria that are contingent upon the epistemological commitments of the researcher. For example, from a neo-empiricist perspective a researcher may use an audit trail of the analytic process to highlight how the effects of researcher bias have been accounted for. The term *bias* is a loaded one, which may be inappropriate in some qualitative research traditions but a key source of concern in others. Miles and Huberman (1994) discuss some of the ways the researcher can avoid bias when conducting case study research. They suggest the possible downsides of case studies are holistic fallacy, where the researcher sees more congruence than there really is; elite bias, where there is an over-emphasis on the accounts of particular individuals; and 'going native', where we lose our research perspective by aligning with the case. In avoiding 'going native' (Miles, 1994: 263), Simon found it helpful to hold periodic review meetings with key stakeholders, including the senior leadership team of each of his research cases, to review and help validate the interim findings throughout the research process. It was important to Simon that he felt confident that he was interpreting the data 'accurately'. Hence he used these review meetings to check for 'researcher effects' and going native – both from and to the cases. It was beneficial in these cases that the key stakeholders were robust, insightful and direct in their feedback.

A different criterion altogether would be taken by authors working in a postmodernist perspective. Johnson et al. (2006), for example, outline the criterion of de-centring the author, where the researcher reflexively considers their own narrative and the different elements that have impacted upon its construction. This criterion relates to reflexivity, which is covered in the next section, and which is important in order to ensure a balanced perspective throughout the research endeavour.

In summary, there are a range of quality criteria associated with proximity/distance which the researcher can draw upon to make sense of their role.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity focuses on the role the researcher has in knowledge production and is therefore fundamental to understanding how distance is managed. Reflexivity should be an iterative process throughout a research project, and other chapters in this volume discuss examples of reflexive practice. The aim is that the researcher is aware of their own influence and contribution to shaping their research and the consequent analysis and interpretation of findings (Salzman, 2002). In doing so, the research may change as it progresses as a result of reflexive insights. Moreover, a reflexive stance enables the researcher to account for their own interests in the research process. For example, in a piece of research that Catherine conducted with Gillian Symon about how occupational psychologists assess the quality of qualitative research, when publishing their analysis both authors felt it was important to critique their own role and interests in the production of the analysis:

Our analysis of the data although firmly grounded in the interview talk, was also influenced by our experience of working in the field as work psychologists and as qualitative researchers. Hence our interpretations are also located within our own sensemaking framework about our commitment to qualitative research and the potential we see for it in the work psychology field. Furthermore, we argue that any more favourable treatment of qualitative research within our discipline would not only be welcome to qualitative researchers like ourselves, but may also be in our own professional interests. (Cassell & Symon, 1994: 648)

Weick (2002) advises that attention on the researcher is important and that researchers can focus upon a range of aspects of the research, including making sure that all voices are listened to. Hence reflexivity is an important tool for understanding the researcher's role and how they effectively manage critical distance. As Nadin and Cassell (2006) highlight, the 'potential benefits in relation to qualitative research [of reflexivity] relate to both a greater understanding of the role and impact of the researcher (Cassell, 2005), and

an increased “trustworthiness” of the data, and general “integrity” in the research process (Finlay, 2002, p. 531).

Using a Research Diary

An effective method to start the process of reflexivity is for the management researcher to keep a diary throughout the research process. The process of writing down one's experiences, thoughts, learning, issues and reactions to the research activity is in itself a helpful way to make sense of it. It also helps to raise one's own awareness of oneself, and to seek to interpret what is happening in the research process and how one is responding to that as it plays out and in retrospect. Here, issues regarding the development of relationships in the research, for example, can be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis.

Nadin and Cassell (2006: 208) suggest that ‘all researchers should systematically use a research diary, regardless of epistemological position. However, what is needed first and foremost is a commitment to the pursuit of reflexivity and awareness on one's own epistemological assumptions’. This reflects the assumption noted earlier that in relation to quality criteria, epistemological and methodological congruence is important. However, there is the danger that this congruence risks the use of epistemological blinkers, where researchers justify their method and role because it is consistent with their epistemological position. Behaving in a reflexive way is fundamentally about accepting challenge, so it may be helpful to create some distance from an epistemological position by accepting challenges from peers with different positions. This could provide a fresh perspective to the research process and the methods used.

Some of the benefits Nadin and Cassell (2006) suggest that we can derive from maintaining a research diary include exploring ‘methodological issues’ to find improvements in research methods, supplementing the content of the interview data, increasing personal

insight (‘my own observations of myself as a researcher’), helping to organise the research, providing a ‘forum’ to record insights outside the specific research focus, and longitudinal reflection and learning as ‘reflexivity is an ongoing process’ (2006: 211–12).

In our experience we have both used research diaries as a way of creating room for reflexivity. Simon maintained a research diary throughout his doctoral research, which was a helpful source of insight and a way to make sense of the journey he undertook. It was an ongoing record of events such as conferences and supervisor meetings, reading and research experiences, insights gained and implications for the research activity. It contained over 10,000 words of reflections and interpretation. It was useful for developing the conceptual framework in that it helped to tie together the various strands of insight, and to maintain a helpful perspective towards particular aspects of the cases or theories. The structure of a research diary is a matter of personal taste in some respects, and the form it takes will in itself reflect something of the researcher's mindset. In considering how to set up a research diary it is helpful to reflect upon how it might enable us to answer the questions posed by Haynes (2012) in relation to reflexivity: ‘What is the motivation for undertaking this research? What underlying assumptions I am bringing to it? How am I connected to the research, theoretically, experientially, emotionally? And what effect will this have on my approach?’ (Haynes, 2012: 78). Such questions bring issues of critical distance to the fore.

Simon found that reading through diary entries at different stages of his research stimulated new thinking. For example, at one point in the middle of data collection, reading the diary was a reminder about why the cases had initially been selected and the caveats he originally had about each case. Before selecting one case in particular, Simon had considered several potential problems, as recorded in the research diary, including a possible conflict of interest given his association with

the case as a consultant, and whether it was too complex as a case. Through this process of review he was able to consider these issues and check that sufficient distance was present through holding specific discussions with both his supervisor and his sponsors in the case. By collecting insights in the diary over time he was also able to identify and correct trends in interpretation that he felt were potentially biased, such as recognising his personal desire to reach a simple set of conclusions based on a single theoretical position, which was in practice not how the analysis ended up.

As a reflexive tool the research diary is a foundation for maintaining critical distance. As Haynes (2012: 76) suggests: 'reflexivity forces the researcher to re-examine his or her positioning in relation to methodology, theory, participants and the self'. This is in order to achieve what Haynes (2012: 87) describes as 'increase[d] accountability for the knowledge that is produced'.

Peer Review

An issue that Nadin and Cassell (2006: 210) highlight with reflexivity is that it 'is conceived as a process located within, and owned by, an individual researcher'. Reflexivity is often seen as an isolated process, whereas we would agree with Salzman's (2002) contention that debate and challenge are also important aspects of achieving critical distance. Salzman (2002: 812) argues for the value of debate rather than reflexivity to achieve greater objectivity and therefore greater likelihood of knowledge rather than subjective experience or opinion. He argues for 'a vital and vigorous marketplace of ideas ... to replace solitary research with collaborative team research, in which the perspectives and insights of each researcher can be challenged and tested by the others' (Salzman, 2002: 812). The long-respected route of peer review and challenging debate among researchers is also useful in ensuring that

researchers are challenged and can achieve appropriate levels of critical distance.

As Salzman, writing about anthropological research, describes: 'Dahrendorf asserts, "Insofar as truth exists at all, it exists not as a possession of the individual scholar, but as the net result of scientific exchange". (1968: 243)'. It is through collective criticism and discussion that knowledge emerges (Salzman, 2002: 812). Simon found in his research that it was through dialogue and debate with peers and supervisors that his data analysis was refined and meaning sharpened. Debate also helped to make sense of the impact he was having as a researcher in the cases he was researching, and to work out how to explore this with those cases to understand better the impact of his activity. There is a powerful combination between the self-criticism of reflexive thinking and the challenge from peers in constructive debate that helps to develop an appropriate level of critical distance and confidence in the knowledge contribution of particular research.

CONCLUSION

As stated at the beginning of the chapter, we know that the qualitative management and organisational researcher will have some sort of impact upon the phenomenon they study, so a key issue becomes how researcher distance and proximity are managed. We have argued that managing this relationship is critical in that it is both important and worthy of reflection. In thinking of ways of structuring such reflection we have suggested that there are three main areas of focus: (1) the philosophical framework within which the research is conducted; (2) the context and (3) relationships within the research field. We are not arguing that these three areas are mutually exclusive, but rather in identifying them as significant we can highlight the various choices available to the researcher in critiquing their role and their proximity to their

research participants. The constant challenge for the qualitative researcher into organisations and management is to contribute to knowledge whilst acknowledging our subjectivity and its impact upon our research. Through active and ongoing critique of this subjectivity as researchers (through reflexion and debate), we can make sense of the complexity of human systems and indeed use the subjectivity of both ourselves and our research participants to understand different perspectives as data that help to inform our research.

REFERENCES

- Becker, H. (1967). Whose side are we on?, *Social Problems*, 14 (3), 239–247.
- Berger, P.L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: a treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. London: Penguin.
- Brewer, J.D. (2004). Ethnography. In C.M. Cassell and G. Symon (Eds.), *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research*. London: Sage. pp. 312–322.
- Buchanan, D. (2012). Case studies in organizational research. In G. Symon and C.M. Cassell (Eds.), *Qualitative organizational research: core methods and current challenges*. London: Sage. pp. 351–370.
- Cassell, C.M. (2005). Creating the interviewer: identity work in the management research process, *Qualitative Research*, 5 (2), 167–180.
- Cassell, C.M., & Johnson, P. (2006). Action research: explaining the diversity, *Human Relations*, 59 (6), 783–814.
- Cassell, C.M., & Symon, G. (1994). Qualitative methods at work. In C.M. Cassell and G. Symon (Eds.), *Qualitative methods in organizational research: a practical guide*. London: Sage. pp. 1–13.
- Chau, V.S., & Witcher, B.J. (2005). Longitudinal tracer studies: research methodology of the middle range, *British Journal of Management*, 16, 343–355.
- Cunliffe, A.L. (2011). Crafting qualitative research: Morgan and Smircich 30 years on, *Organizational Research Methods*, 14 (4), 647–673.
- Cunliffe, A., & Karunanayake, G. (2013). Working within hyphen-spaces in ethnographic research: implications for research identities and practice, *Organizational Research Methods*, 16 (3), 364–392.
- Dahrendorf, R. (1968). *Essays in the theory of society*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Duberley, J., Johnson, P., & Cassell, C.M. (2012). Philosophies underpinning qualitative research. In G. Symon and C.M. Cassell (Eds.), *Qualitative organizational research: core methods and current challenges*. London: Sage. pp. 15–34.
- Eden, C., & Huxham, C. (1996). Action research for management research, *British Journal of Management*, 7 (1), 75–86.
- Feldman, M.S., Bell, J., & Berger, M.T. (2003). *Gaining access: a practical and theoretical guide for qualitative researchers*. Walnut Creek CA: AltaMira Press.
- Feldman, R. (2010). Contextualism. In J. Dancy, E. Sosa and M. Steup (Eds.), *A companion to epistemology*, 2nd edition. Oxford: Blackwell. pp. 12–21.
- Finlay, L. (2002). ‘Outing’ the researcher: the provenance, principles and practice of reflexivity. *Qualitative Health Research*, 12 (4), 531–545.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(2), 219–245.
- Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1995). *Ethnography: principles and practice*. London: Routledge.
- Hastings, W. (2010). Research and the ambiguity of reflexivity and ethical practice. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 13 (3), 307–318.
- Haynes, K. (2012). Reflexivity in qualitative research. In G. Symon and C.M. Cassell (Eds.), *Qualitative organizational research: core methods and current challenges*. London: Sage. pp. 72–89.
- Isaac, W.N. (1999). Dialogic leadership, *The Systems Thinker*, 10 (1), 1–5. Pegasus Communications.
- Johnson, P., Buehring, A., Cassell, C.M., & Symon, G. (2006). Evaluating qualitative management research: towards a contingent criteriology, *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 8 (3), 131–156.

- Johnson, P., & Duberley, J. (2003). Reflexivity in management research, *Journal of Management Studies*, 40 (5), 1279–1303.
- Lee, B., Collier, P., & Cullen, J. (2007). Reflections on the use of case studies in the accounting, management and organizational disciplines, *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 2(3), 169–178.
- Lewin, K. (1951). *Field theory in social science*. New York: Harper.
- Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E. G. (1989). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Michailova, S., Piekkari, R., Plakoyiannaki, E., Ritvala, T., Mihailova, I., & Salmi, A. (2014). Breaking the silence about exiting fieldwork: a relational approach and its implications for theorizing, *Academy of Management Review*, 39 (2), 138–161.
- Miles, M., & Huberman, M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*, 2nd edition. London: Sage.
- Nadin, S., & Cassell, C. (2006). The use of a research diary as a tool for reflexive practice, *Qualitative Research Methods in Accounting and Management*, 3 (3), 208–217.
- Salzman, P.C. (2002). On reflexivity, *American Anthropologist*, 104 (3), 805–813.
- Simpson, A., Slutskaya, N., Hughes, J., & Simpson, R. (2014). The use of ethnography to explore meanings that refuse collectors attach to their work, *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 9 (3), 183–200.
- Sveningsson, P., & Alvesson, M. (2003). Managing managerial identities: organizational fragmentation, discourse and identity struggle, *Human Relations*, 56 (10), 1163–1193.
- Symon, G., & Cassell, C.M. (Eds.) (2012). *Qualitative organizational research: core methods and current challenges*. London: Sage.
- Teitze, S. (2012). Researching your own organization. In G. Symon and C.M. Cassell (Eds.), *Qualitative organizational research: core methods and current challenges*. London: Sage. pp. 53–71.
- Van Maanen, J. (2011). *Tales of the field*, 2nd edition. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Weick, K.E. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations*. London: Sage. pp. 17–61.
- Weick, K.E. (2002). Real-time reflexivity: prods to reflection, *Organization Studies*, 23 (6), 893–898.
- Yanow, D., & Schwartz-Shea, P. (2006). *Interpretation and method: empirical research methods and the interpretive turn*. New York: M.E. Sharpe.
- Yanow, D., Ybema, S., & van Hulst, M. (2012). Practising organizational ethnography. In G. Symon and C.M. Cassell (Eds.), *Qualitative organizational research: core methods and current challenges*. London: Sage. pp. 331–350.

Reflexivity and Researcher Positionality

Sandra Corlett and Sharon Mavin

INTRODUCTION

Reflexivity is considered an integral aspect of qualitative research. It involves us, as researchers, understanding how processes of doing research shape its outcomes (Hardy et al., 2001), reflecting upon the ways in which we carry out our empirical research projects, and explaining to an audience how we move through research manufacturing processes to certain conclusions. Reflection and reflexivity are sometimes used synonymously, but Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2009: 8) distinguish between them, conceiving ‘reflexive empirical research ... as a particular, specified version of reflective research, involving reflection on several levels or directed at several themes’. Hibbert et al. (2010: 48) go further and understand reflexivity as related to, but ‘qualitatively different from’, reflection. For them, whilst reflection might enable researchers to observe research practice, as it might be reflected back to them from a mirror image, reflexivity involves

‘exposing or questioning our ways of doing’ (Hibbert et al., 2010: 48). Therefore, reflexivity has a ‘self-referential characteristic of “bending-back” some thought upon the self, such that it takes the form of *subject-object-subject*’ (Archer, 2009: 2, emphasis in original) and also a recursive dimension where, ‘through questioning the bases of our interpretations, reflexivity brings about change in the process of reflection’ (Hibbert et al., 2010: 48). For us, therefore, reflexivity is always a self-monitoring of, and a self-responding to, our thoughts, feelings and actions as we engage in research projects.

In this chapter we outline understandings of reflexivity as practices of appreciating our own researcher positionality in relation to questions about what kind of knowledge is possible – our epistemology; the ‘doing’ of research and our relations with research participants and others; and evaluating qualitative management research. We acknowledge reflexivity as ambiguous and complex and consider how processes of reflexivity address

researcher positionality, identity and power in research. We briefly offer practical examples of ‘doing’ reflexivity in management research to highlight how researchers might consider processes of reflexivity in their own qualitative management research and discuss collective reflexivity, involving research co-producers and users, as areas for future development in reflexive practice. We conclude by summarizing our discussions in the chapter and offering our ‘authorial identity’ (Alvesson et al., 2008: 483) reflections on the chapter we have produced.

REFLEXIVITY: DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDINGS, DIFFERENT PRACTICES

Reflexivity is variously conceived and has different implications for qualitative research practice and outcomes, dependent on the underlying ontological and epistemological orientations of the researcher (Day, 2012; Johnson & Duberley, 2000). For instance, in the context of discussing shifts from modern to postmodern understandings of doing qualitative research, Pillow (2003: 180) states that ‘reflexivity as a methodological practice is dependent on a subject or subjects to reflect on and how the subject is thought is key then to how reflexivity is practiced’. For example, a researcher coming from a modernist understanding of self as singular and knowable will position the purposes and practices of reflexivity quite differently to someone with a postmodern understanding of self as multiple and unknowable (Pillow, 2003). For instance, a researcher with a modernist approach might argue that self-reflexive practices enable the researcher to ‘truly’ know her/his self and, thus, to provide a ‘true’ account of how her/his subjectivity impacted the research process, whereas a postmodernist researcher might acknowledge the challenges of engaging in self-reflexive practices and qualify self-knowledge as

partial and any research process account as limited (Pillow, 2003).

Notwithstanding its different understandings and practices, reflexivity is generally understood as giving ‘attention to the complex relationship between processes of knowledge production and the various contexts of such processes, as well as the involvement of the knowledge producer’ (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009: 8). Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009: 9) identify two basic characteristics of what they call ‘reflective mode’ empirical research: careful interpretation and reflection. Because empirical data are ‘the *results of interpretation*’, we need to pay attention to our theoretical assumptions, pre-understandings and the importance of language (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009: 9, emphasis in original). Paying attention also involves a process of reflection – the ‘*interpretation of interpretation*’ – involving critical self-exploration not only of how empirical data have been interpreted (and constructed) but also systematic reflection on several different levels, including the researcher, the research community and, more broadly, social, cultural, intellectual and linguistic traditions (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009: 9, emphasis in original). As qualitative researchers ‘doing reflexivity’, we aim to ‘bend-back’ on (Archer, 2009) and turn ‘inwards’ towards (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009: 9) ourselves and to think seriously about our research practices.

To help us in that endeavour, we draw on the view of reflexivity as being about questioning (Cunliffe, 2011) three aspects of research practice (Day, 2012). First, reflexivity involves questioning our understanding of reality and the nature of knowledge and how alternative paradigms and perspectives can open up new ways of thinking about phenomena (Alvesson et al., 2008). Second, it is about questioning our relationships with the research context, the research subjects/participants and the research data. Third, reflexivity involves questioning what is considered ‘valid’ and valuable research.

Respectively, these questions relate to the ‘thinking’, ‘doing’, and ‘evaluating’ of qualitative research (Day, 2012). In structuring the chapter around these three aspects, which we view as ‘interconnected and mutually related’ (Haynes, 2012: 85), we present and discuss questions posed by others in their writing on reflexivity and illustrate some of the practices, engaged in by ourselves and other scholars, in ‘doing reflexivity’. The questions, which we discuss at appropriate points in the chapter, are summarized in the Appendix.

THE REFLEXIVE ‘THINKING’ OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

A way of understanding reflexivity relates to questions about what kind of knowledge is possible – our epistemology – or what Day (2012) refers to as the ‘thinking’ of qualitative methodology. In this discussion, we consider questions about our epistemological position and assumptions, and how these relate to questions of representation and truth.

Questions About Our Epistemological Position and Assumptions

Johnson and Duberley (2000) argue that we need to ensure we do research consistent with our epistemological positions, and maintaining such consistency ‘raises issues about reflexivity’ (p. 177), for instance in being aware and critical of the origins, assumptions and implications of such positions. This form of reflexivity ‘entails the researcher attempting to think about their own thinking’ and how we practise this form depends on our a priori philosophical assumptions (Johnson & Duberley, 2000: 178). Similarly, Cunliffe (2011: 415) notes that thinking about the following two questions influences how we choose to engage with reflexivity:

- What are my assumptions about the nature of reality and who we are as humans?
- What do I see as the nature of knowledge?

Epistemological reflexivity appreciates how the phenomena we study are seen through our ontological and epistemological lens and thus acknowledges our assumptions – about the world and about knowledge – and their implications for the research and its findings. For instance, Johnson and Duberley (2003) discuss how researchers with realist ontological and objectivist epistemological positions engage in what they call methodological reflexivity. However, in this chapter, we focus on qualitative research that conceptualizes social reality as being constructed. Indeed, the concept and practice of reflexivity in qualitative research can be traced back, in part, to social constructionist assumptions of social reality (Cunliffe, 2011) and to the ‘linguistic turn’, which Holland (1999: 466) sees as part of the ‘reflexive turn’, in social science research.

Questions About Representation and Truth

Acknowledging that social reality is constructed and appreciating the way in which language frames our world view, and paradoxically how it enables and inhibits understanding, is a key element in what is sometimes referred to as ‘the crisis of representation’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011: 3) or a ‘crisis of truth’ (Cunliffe, 2003: 983) from which reflexivity developed. Cunliffe (2003: 983) identifies ‘a crisis of representation, an emphasis on the constitutive nature of language, and a call for reflexive approaches to research’ as themes which emerged from challenges to mainstream social science research and its absolute truth, objective view of the world. Reflexivity ‘unsettles’ representation (Cunliffe, 2003: 985) by questioning the belief that ‘competent observers could, with objectivity, clarity, and precision report

on their own observations of the social world, including the experiences of others' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011: 11). Hardy et al. (2001) trace the history of reflexivity from the 1950s–1970s as calls for researchers, undertaking cultural anthropological and sociological studies, to declare and remove biases which were assumed, from an objectivist viewpoint, to distort the 'truth'. As it was believed that a researcher's interests, values and theoretical presuppositions could not be eradicated from their work, reflexivity became focused upon rendering biases visible through personal disclosure, so that audiences could take them into account (Hardy et al., 2001).

Scholars working from poststructuralist and postmodernist positions further developed reflexive approaches (Cunliffe, 2003; Hardy et al., 2001) by undermining assumptions that research subjects existed in any 'real' sense and that researchers could objectively report on their experiences (Hardy et al., 2001: 535). As well as accepting that observations are 'socially situated' and constructed and that accounts of experiences are partial (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011: 12), scholars acknowledged that 'interpretation-free, theory-neutral facts do not, in principle, exist' (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009: 1). Rivera and Tracy's (2014) paper on 'Embodying emotional dirty work: A messy text of patrolling the border' is an incredibly powerful example of this reflexivity. We have included an extract which illustrates how the researchers acknowledge their observations as socially situated, constructed and partial:

What does dirty work feel like?

What does researching dirty work – doing 'dirty research' – feel like?

In this essay, we ask and answer these research questions via a qualitative study and writing a 'messy text' (Marcus, 1994) of U.S. Border Patrol agents. Messy texts acknowledge that writing is not a mirror but a way to frame the scene. Messy texts are open-ended, fractured, and emotional. They centralize writers' experiences as pivotal to the knowledge produced.

As illustrated within, dirty work feels confusing, lonely, and courageous. It feels ambivalent, constrained by regulations and job descriptions that do not always seem to make sense given contradictory circumstances, contexts, and communities. And, as a researcher alongside dirty workers, it feels nerve-wracking to watch something that is usually hidden from public view. Of course, this is just the shorthand. Feelings of dirty work do not come in a neat bulleted list, but rather through the rich and embodied narratives of the scene. (Rivera & Tracy, 2014: 202)

In interpreting and writing qualitative reports of such observations, accounts and other qualitative data, we are always '*re-presenting*' (Cousin, 2010: 10, emphasis in original) our own and others' experiences and interpreting these 'from a particular stance and an available language' (Cousin, 2010: 10). Day (2012: 61–2) poses questions about representation and truth:

- In our representations of the social world, what are our underlying assumptions about the production of knowledge – how do we know, and who can claim to know? ... who can make claims to 'know' and represent others using qualitative approaches?

When social reality is conceptualized as constructed, reflexivity acknowledges the situated nature of knowledge (Alvesson et al., 2008). The knowledges we generate, as knowledge producers, are 'limited, specific and partial' (Rose, 1997: 306), and shaped by our particular interests and the specific circumstances in which we conduct the research. Again, Rivera and Tracy's (2014) paper is a powerful example which acknowledges the 'writers' experiences as pivotal to the knowledge produced' (p. 202). To enable us to engage in this form of reflexivity whereby we confront the 'taken-for-granted assumptions which traditionally inform our knowledge claims' (Johnson & Duberley, 2003: 1294), Cassell et al. (2005) offer a series of questions about how the question we develop to 'define' our research influences the kinds of insights we might generate and the 'truth claims' we make.

- How has the research question defined and limited what can be 'found'?
- What findings/insights do I hope to generate from this question?
- On what basis will these findings/insights contribute to 'knowledge', i.e. what kinds of knowledges am I producing?
- How will the resultant knowledges function to shape the world, i.e. what 'truth claims' will I make?

Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2009: 9) refer to 'reflective' (rather than reflexive) mode research and suggest that, in the context of empirical research, it involves taking 'a sceptical approach to what appear at a superficial glance as unproblematic replicas of the way reality functions', while simultaneously maintaining the belief that the interpretation of well thought-out excerpts from this reality can provide a basis for knowledge generation which 'opens up rather than closes, and furnishes opportunities for understanding rather than establishing "truths"'. Thus, making known our thinking, for instance on the nature of the truth claims we are making, enables us to 'situate knowledge reflexively' (Rose, 1997: 315). Indeed, Rose (1997) proposes that the 'crucial goal' of 'situating academic knowledge is to produce non-overgeneralizing knowledges that learn from other kinds of knowledges' (Rose, 1997: 315). An example of this comes from Sharon's PhD thesis (Mavin, 2001) into women academics' experiences in UK business schools. Engaging in reflexivity on her position as a researcher and woman academic when researching her own business school, she wrote reflexive accounts of her own experiences. This reflexive process enabled Sharon to go beyond a surface analysis of the women academics' accounts which could have been overgeneralized to how women undermined other women (e.g. women academics being perceived as 'Queen Bees' by other women). By identifying and exploring the contradictions and tensions in the women academics' accounts and by contrasting and comparing others' experiences

with her own local knowledges, Sharon was able to move theoretically to develop 'female misogyny'. She situated this knowledge within the context of a specific gendered organization where: promotion for women was scarce; where women were constructed as unambitious mothers; where competition between women was hidden; and where women's negative relations with each other were used as a means of reinforcing the gendered hierarchy. Sharon included a chapter entitled 'My Voice' in the thesis and began the chapter with one of her own reflexive accounts. We have included this account and the introduction section to the chapter to illustrate Sharon's process of reflexivity:

My own experience of female misogyny is as a result of being perceived as simultaneously 'a bit on the side' of an academic man and also as 'too ambitious' as I chose to join the research culture of the Business School. Both academic men and women have told me, either as an attack or as a warning, that women in the Business School can be 'too ambitious'.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to contribute original theory to the existing body of knowledge and therefore I begin by highlighting the specific areas where this has been achieved, before moving to discuss them in more detail. Within this chapter I introduce a metaphor to further interpret the narrative texts of women academics and to identify the discourses which play a part in the social constructions of their identity and place in the Business School. This allows the alternative voices of academic women participants to be heard and I amplify the conflicting voices and perceptions as they emerge. I then move to add my own voice to the story, thus locating myself within the thesis. (Mavin, 2001: 214)

Multi-perspective reflexivity practices, in which 'researchers use tensions among different perspectives to expose different assumptions and open up new ways of thinking' (Alvesson et al., 2008: 483), provide a means of understanding and acknowledging the influence of our theoretical perspectives on

knowledge production. Multi-perspective reflexivity questions encourage us to consider:

- What are the different ways in which a phenomenon can be understood? How do they produce different knowledge(s)? (Alvesson et al., 2008: 487)
- How could the research question be investigated differently, e.g. from a different epistemological perspective? What different insights may be made by taking a different epistemological perspective? (Cassell et al., 2005)

Haynes (2012) advises that, as researchers, 'we should try to be aware of how our ontological, social and political positioning affects the work that we do by informing the choices we make about research topics, questions, approaches, methodologies and outcomes' (p. 78). She suggests practical strategies for achieving this, for instance, by writing down any theoretical assumptions and presuppositions we have about the subject of our research, revisiting these throughout the research process, and noting how these may have shifted (Haynes, 2012). Sandra (Corlett) did this in her doctoral research project and presented diagrammatically the shifts in her understandings of different theoretical perspectives, and their implications for the framing of the research aim and focus, as a series of footsteps moving from one epistemological positioning to another (Corlett, 2009). When introducing the figure showing Sandra's movements between and shifts in ontological and epistemological positionings, she wrote:

When considering approaches to research, Crotty (1998, p.216) proposes that '[r]ather than selecting established paradigms to follow, we [use] established paradigms to delineate and illustrate our own'. Crotty's (1998) use of the word 'delineate' suggests a clearer demarcation between established paradigms than my own understandings of them would suggest. The notion of 'following' a paradigm implies movement and I have experienced this through the shifts in my understandings of different perspectives and the strength with which I have asserted particular ontological and epistemological commitments of this research over the course of the study. (Corlett, 2009: 80)

In the following section in the thesis, Sandra outlined 'the rationale for incorporating and rejecting aspects of different epistemological commitments' (Corlett, 2009: 81). For example, Sandra explained how she moved from claiming a social constructivist approach, in the early stages of the PhD project, towards social constructionism to give further attention to relational and contextual processes (of identity construction). She also explained that, whilst she did not share the research goals of critical poststructuralists in 'explor[ing] the power effect of discourses on self-identity or as a platform for political or social activism', she subsequently considered naive her view of identity construction as a power-neutral process. Sandra's awareness of the shifts in her epistemological and political commitments enabled her to clarify the research aim of the thesis and its positioning, which she described, in the section conclusion, as follows:

the term and positioning of this research as relational social constructionist are employed to distinguish it from social constructivist, social constructionist and poststructuralist approaches. Whilst this research approach has elements in common with [these approaches], it diverges away from [them] in important respects relating to its, and my own, 'ontological commitments, intellectual priorities and theoretical preoccupations' (Chia, 1995, p. 579). (Corlett, 2009: 87)

To summarize this part of the chapter, we have discussed debates surrounding reflexivity which focus on the nature of reality and knowledge, and considered questions about our epistemological position and assumptions, including about representation and truth. Reflexive practice involves 'thinking' about and acknowledging how our own theoretical perspectives are interwoven with linguistic and other elements, such as our political agendas and social relations, in ways that shape the knowledge production process (Alvesson et al., 2008; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Day, 2012). We give more attention to the social and political elements of reflexive practice in the next part, related

to the ‘doing’ of qualitative research, where we pose and consider a series of methodological questions.

THE REFLEXIVE ‘DOING’ OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: METHODOLOGICAL QUESTIONS OF RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

If we see reflexivity as a process of opening ourselves up to scrutiny (Cunliffe, 2003), then this involves questioning the way we do our research (Cunliffe, 2011) and ‘understanding how the process of doing research shapes its outcomes’ (Hardy et al., 2001: 533). Therefore, as researchers, we need to appraise critically our own research methods and engage in ‘methodological reflexivity’ (Cassell et al., 2005; Johnson & Duberley, 2003). This form of reflexivity involves being reflexive about our role and relationships with the research context, research participants, and research data, and about the resulting reports we produce. In other words, our reflexive practice and the reflexive texts we write ‘in some way take into account their own manufacturing conditions’ (Pels, 2000: 6). In our discussion, we explore methodological issues generated by the ‘doing’ of qualitative research and consider questions relating to methodological and method choices and about the researcher’s motivations, role, positionality, identity, power and voice.

Methodological Reflexivity: Methodological and Method Choices

Methodological reflexivity accepts that the researcher makes methodological and method choices, and acknowledges that research methods, as used by researchers, are not neutral tools – each have ‘philosophical baggage’ (Gill & Johnson, 2010: 6).

Therefore, continuing the theme we introduced in the reflexive ‘thinking’ part of qualitative research, we need to be aware of how our philosophical commitments influence our methodological choices (Gill & Johnson, 2010). Reflexive researchers make explicit this baggage to an audience and provide a convincing account of the knowledge ‘manufacturing conditions’ (Pels, 2000). Questions relating to methodological reflexivity include:

- What research method/s is/are used? (Cunliffe, 2011; James & Vinnicombe, 2002)
- What is the purpose of the methods? (Cassell et al., 2005)
- What is the impact of the research method(s) on the research? (Johnson & Duberley, 2003)
- What constitutes ‘data’? How do I interpret the ‘data’? (Cunliffe, 2011)
- What data do I ‘collect’? How do I collect and analyse the data? How do I manage ‘objectivity’ in the data analysis? (James & Vinnicombe, 2002)
- What data have I chosen to include and to leave out in my presentation of findings/interpretations?

Our philosophical assumptions influence our understandings of what counts as data, and how data are ‘collected’, interpreted and presented (James & Vinnicombe, 2002). Reflexive practice acknowledges that data are produced, not collected, and that the research product is fundamentally related to the process of production (May, 2002). The researcher’s personal involvement in data production need not be constructed as bad practice or bias but as a source of data in its own right (James & Vinnicombe, 2002). Indeed, Gabriel (2015: 334) discusses how the reflexive researcher cannot separate the empirical material from the self. Harding (1987), in considering feminist research processes, goes further to argue that ‘the beliefs and behaviors of the researcher are part of the empirical evidence for (or against) the claims advanced in the results of the research. *This* evidence too must be open to critical scrutiny no less than what is traditionally

defined as relevant evidence' (p. 9, emphasis in original). She proposes that we increase research objectivity by acknowledging 'this "subjective" element' (Harding, 1987: 9). This form of reflexivity, exploring the researcher's relationship with the object of research (Harding, 1987), includes becoming conscious of our personal motivations and interests (Cunliffe, 2011; Haynes, 2012; James & Vinnicombe, 2002). Again Sharon's (Mavin, 2001) reflexive process in her PhD thesis is useful to illustrate this form of reflexivity. Sharon was 'expected' to complete a positivist approach to the research and did so via a survey to men and women academics on their experiences of careers in business schools. A change to the supervision team enabled her to move to a feminist standpoint and to focus on the social construction of women academics' experiences. Her motivations were to give voice to women academics, identify the barriers to academic careers and to surface the gendered nature of the cultures of UK business schools in the late 1990s. However, one of the theoretical contributions, female misogyny, significantly challenged her motivations – that women could be 'blamed' for constraining other women's careers was not what she wanted to find. A turning inwards to engage in self-reflexivity led Sharon to rethink the complexity in the women's accounts and her own experiences. She included the following extract in her thesis:

As a researcher I am aware that I am always engaged in living, telling, reliving and retelling my own stories. As an introduction to the analysis of the culture of the Business School and the identities and places of academic women within this culture, there are a number of issues to consider. Firstly, I am aware that at times I interpret the perceptions of women academics as a homogenous group, underpinned by the similarities in their narratives discussed in chapter seven. Secondly, there are places within the analysis where the women give diverse perceptions of their experiences and identities within the Business School and these give rise to a number of contradictions in the analysis, which I highlight as they emerge. Thirdly, I am aware of the processes of categorisation the academic

women go through in their stories and my own comments on this process come later in this chapter. (Mavin 2001, Chapter 8: 220)

Self-Reflexivity: Questions about Researcher Motivations

The subject–object–subject bending-back on the self (Archer, 2009), in processes of 'self-reflexivity' (Cunliffe, 2011) or 'personal reflexivity' (Willig, 2001), involves reflecting on how our research projects are shaped by our interests, values, experiences and political commitments (Willig, 2001). Researchers have posed self-reflexivity questions, relating to the chosen research topic and personal motivations and interests for studying it, as:

- Why am I undertaking the research topic I have selected? What are my personal motivations? What are my personal and political reasons for undertaking my research? What personal experiences do I have related to my research topic? (James & Vinnicombe, 2002: 97)
- What (or who) has prompted the research and why? How is the research shaped by my own personal interest and, if applicable, the interests of a sponsoring organization? Has this influenced the framing of the research question and the context in which the research is carried out? (James & Vinnicombe, 2002: 97)
- What is the motivation for undertaking this research? How am I connected to the research, theoretically, experientially, emotionally? And what effect will this have on my approach? (Haynes, 2012: 78)

Self-reflexivity presupposes that, in undertaking research projects and writing research accounts, we are disclosing something about ourselves and writing a piece of our autobiography (Pels, 2000) and that, as researchers, what we do, say and write 'defines and redefines both ourselves and the texts we produce' (Gabriel, 2015: 334). Therefore, qualitative researchers are encouraged to present honest, self-searching but not indulgent accounts, because the idea of (re-)defining ourselves should not divert all attention away from the

results of the research process itself (May, 2002). Haynes (2012) explains how her doctoral study was motivated both by particular theoretical interests and a desire to better understand herself. Kathryn combined her theoretical interests in identity, motherhood and accounting, and her research project's aim to examine the identity politics of women accountants through their interrelations with experiences of motherhood, with 'some much more personal aims [of wanting] to try to understand, as part of a process of self-discovery, how I came to be myself, as a woman, mother, accountant and academic' (Haynes, 2012: 78). Although reflexive research does not need to be driven by such explicit personal aims, it is important 'to acknowledge and articulate the varied motivations, theoretical and/or personal, underpinning any research, as these are likely to shape the way the research is conceived, carried out, interpreted and produced' (Haynes, 2012: 79). Sandra provides a further example of self-reflexivity in her doctoral thesis (Corlett, 2009) where she: acknowledges her interest and its possible effects on the phenomenon being studied; articulates her position in relation to the research topic; writes herself into the thesis and uses 'I' in her writing; and includes a final (reflections) chapter which considers, alongside theoretical contributions, the effects of the research on herself. For example, in a section in the thesis Introduction, entitled 'My position in relation to the subject', Sandra introduced her interest in the subject of self-identity and considered how her personal experiences may have impacted on the study's focus, its central argument and the key theories it drew on. For instance, Sandra gave an example of tracing back her initial interest in the field of identity to the early stages of her professional experiences some twenty-five years previously, even though 'at that time, I would not have used the term "identity" in trying to make sense of my experiences' (p. 12). In addition to acknowledging when her interests in the topic of self-identity may have been initiated,

Sandra acknowledged that, through the PhD study and its processes of research, 'I am both the researcher and "the researched", as I try to make sense of and reconstruct my self-identity to incorporate this new "role" [as a "researcher"]' (p. 14). As one further aspect of self-reflexivity in the same section of the thesis, Sandra offered explanations for why she may have used particular theories of self-identity or particular authors' works, and focused the study on the interrelations of vulnerability and identity work. For example, she wrote:

I do not want to suggest that I only actively engage in identity work when I change roles, or that it is the job title or 'label' which causes me to reframe my self-identity. However, transitions of different types do seem to feature strongly in my narrative.... Also I do tend to 'position' myself and draw on 'external discursive "social-identities"' (Watson, 2008, p.121) in making sense of who I am. It is probably also for this reason that I have been drawn, in this study, towards Harré and van Langenhove's (1999) positioning theory.

Other academic texts have been important to me in making sense of my own identity work and identity construction processes, and in the design of this research study. At the start of my PhD study, I was influenced by Watson and Harris (1999). I was particularly drawn to the questions for managers raised in their study including the 'ways in which moving into managerial work have involved battles about their sense of identity and how they see themselves' and the 'discrepancies between the demands of the role of manager, the expectations this places on them and some sense of their "real" self' (Watson and Harris, 1999, p. 53). I now appreciate that I was drawn to this particular excerpt as it resonated so much with my own experiences of becoming. I was also struck by the idea of 'battles' about self. Less consciously, this may have been the trigger for the focus within this study on vulnerability. (Corlett, 2009: 14)

Therefore, subjecting the researcher's positionality to critical scrutiny is important in understanding the conditions of knowledge production. We turn now to consider further aspects of what Macbeth (2001: 35) refers to as 'positional reflexivity', for instance relating to identity and power.

Self-Reflexivity: Questions About the Researcher's Role, Identity, and Power Relations with Others

Macbeth's (2001) notion of 'positional reflexivity' (p. 35) encourages us to engage in self-referential analysis to understand how biography, place and the positioning of self and other shape the research process. Our earlier discussion about self-reflexivity involving questions about a researcher's motivations and interests recognizes that research is 'as much the researcher's story as it is the story of organizational participants' (Cunliffe, 2011: 415). Knowing the researcher's place makes the research understandable (Harding, 1987) and, therefore, researchers are encouraged to 'seek ways of demonstrating to their audiences their historical and geographic situatedness, their personal investments in the research, [and the] various biases they bring to the work' (Gergen & Gergen, 2000: 1027). Furthermore, knowing the researcher's positioning in relation to others gives context to the researcher's voice, to their perception of the research problem or dilemma, and enables the audiences' understanding of the findings (Day, 2012). Positional reflexivity, therefore, as a further form of self-reflexivity, encourages us to recognize ourselves as an integral part of the research project (Alvesson et al., 2009). Positional reflexivity can be enabled by considering questions such as:

- What is my (expected) role as the researcher? (Cassell et al., 2005; James & Vinnicombe, 2002)
- What effects does my role have on how the research is conducted? (Cassell et al., 2005)
- What are my relationships with research subjects/participants? (Cunliffe, 2011)

Reflexive research practice considers the self as a 'research tool' (Cousin, 2010; Day, 2012) or 'research instrument' (Bourke, 2014; Haynes, 2011; Munkejord, 2009). Therefore, because we are 'intimately connected to the methods we deploy' (Cousin,

2010: 10) and to the roles we play (Day, 2012), self-reflexivity involves monitoring how 'the deployment of particular research protocols and associated field roles' generate behavioural responses, for the researcher, which impact upon the social settings under investigation (Johnson & Duberley, 2003: 1285). 'Reflexive research methodologies ... acknowledge the ways in which the researcher's self and subjectivity mutually and continually affect both the research process and research outcomes' (Haynes, 2011: 134). Some research methodologies make explicit use of the researcher's subjectivity. See, for example, Haynes' (2011) account of the methodological, epistemological and ontological 'tensions' in '(re) presenting the self in reflexive autoethnographical research' (p. 134), and Munkejord's (2009) 'insider' account of collecting field data. Both researchers explore, amongst other aspects, how emotions emerge continuously and influence the research process, leading Munkejord to propose that, in the practice of reflexivity, emotions have tended to be overlooked. Munkejord explains and illustrates how reflexivity can be used, for instance, as a way of understanding the centrality of researcher emotions to interactions with research participants 'in the field' (p. 156). He discusses how awareness of his own emotions, and particularly his feelings of discomfort in presenting himself as a passive observer in the research setting, led to a 're-evaluation of my "role" within the department' and a change in his research strategy whereby he 'decided to approach the respondents more actively' (p. 157). Munkejord (2009: 157) concludes, 'becoming adaptive in the research process is only possible at the point when emotions enter one's awareness as objects for thought connected to the eliciting situation'.

Day (2012) outlines three ways of understanding the self as a research tool: (1) one's role performance and the dynamic enactment of multiple and potentially conflicting

roles; (2) one's multiple, co-constructed identities, prompting reflection on how, for instance, race/gender/class emerge and are made meaningful through research relationships; and (3) the researcher's positionality within particular theoretical perspectives and methodological practices. For instance, Day (2012) discusses how the researcher may present the self (Goffman, 1959) in particular ways to particular audiences for particular purposes in the field. She exemplifies her discussion with Srivastava's (2006) performance, involving emotional labour, of dynamic, multiple and sometimes conflicting field roles. This view of 'the self as a meaningful research tool that shifts back and forth between multiple, and sometimes conflicting, role performances' (Day, 2012: 71) requires researchers to be reflexive about their field-work roles and identities.

Identity

Again, the researcher's epistemological position and assumptions influence understandings of researcher field roles, and the related concept of identities. For instance, when identity is viewed as an ongoing relational process, reflexive practice makes explicit how the researcher's (and the research participants') identities are (re)formed in the doing of research, within the overall research process (Corlett, 2009; Haynes, 2011) and in more specific research situations, such as interviews (Alvesson, 2003; Bryman & Cassell, 2006; Corlett, 2012). Such a relational and dynamic perspective on identity might be reflected in a question such as 'how are race/gender/ class *made meaningful* in this relationship?' (Day, 2012: 72, emphasis in original) as compared with asking, from an entitative and fixed perspective on identity, 'what impact did the researcher's race/gender/class have on the research relationship?' (Day, 2012: 72). Cousin (2010) draws on Srivastava's (2006) work to argue that understanding identities of

researcher and researched as dynamic, multiple and 'always in flux' (Cousin, 2010: 17) would deter a researcher from claiming a 'master status' positioning (p. 13), for example of working-class, white or black, which some researchers emphasize. In other words, the researcher's positionality in relation to the researched is an ongoing point of debate, underpinned by researchers' different epistemological assumptions, and reflected in questions, for example, about how or indeed whether a researcher from a different class (or other social identity) can represent research participants' experiences. An example comes from Sharon's work with Gina Grandy in which they, as academics in business schools, comment on their reflexive journey in doing research with exotic dancers: 'What would colleagues and students think? Does this research have value to organization studies, business and management or is it just "quirky research"? How does this research threaten professional identities?' (Mavin & Grandy, 2013: 239). In the same paper, Gina talks reflexively of her preparations for the data collection, highlighting her positionality in relation to the researched and the research context:

In preparing for each period of data collection the second author was conscious of the potential power dynamics of clean and dirty and presented herself to exotic dancers as a student researcher rather than a member of the 'intellectual academic elite'. Further, in exploring sex work as a site of study in organization studies this research became very much her own identity project. She struggled with what it means to be a 'woman' and confronted her (dis)comfort with her own sexuality and bodily appearance. During data collection, she was often conscious as a woman of feeling less attractive than the women participants.

In addition, as a heterosexual woman she reflected on how others, that is, dancers, customers and colleagues, perceived her sexuality because of the nature of the research. (Mavin & Grandy, 2013: 238)

Srivastava's (2006) contribution to the debate is to argue for acknowledgement of '*the shades of grey*, and the socio-historical

positioning' (p. 213, emphasis in original) of field identities. She illustrates how identity binaries (in her case, female/male, Eastern/Western, old/young, Hindi-speaking/English-speaking etc.) were drawn upon by herself and her research participants in achieving '*temporary shared positionalities*' and in mediating researcher-participant power relations (Srivastava, 2006: 211, emphasis in original). This understanding of field identities as 'continually mediated constructs' (Srivastava, 2006: 214) might lead us to acknowledge research encounters with participants as a 'negotiation of a shared space' (Cousin, 2010: 17). Bourke (2014) conceives research as a shared space, shaped by researcher(s) and participants. He explains how he operationalizes positional reflexivity through exploring 'intertwined' questions such as 'What role did my positionality as a White man studying issues of race in higher education play? How did I use my positionality in different spaces? Did my positionality influence the interactions I had with student participants?' (Bourke, 2014: 2). Milner (2007) presents a framework designed to raise consciousness of the researchers' own and others' racialized positionality and cultural ways of knowing. The framework, which he proposes is transferable from its context in education research to other disciplines, includes 'researching the self' questions designed to enable the researcher to engage in critical (race and cultural) self-reflection (Milner, 2007: 395). The 'researching the self in relation to others' questions encourage us to 'acknowledge the multiple roles, identities and positions that researchers and research participants bring to the research process' (Milner, 2007: 395). Through positional reflexivity, qualitative researchers can consider the impact of positionality, identity and power in producing knowledge. We now turn to consider in more detail how positional reflexivity, as a form of self-reflexivity, acknowledges the politics of the 'doing' of qualitative methodology (Day, 2012).

Power

The different ways in which qualitative researchers conceptualize power have implications for their reflexive practices (Day, 2012). For instance, Day (2012) critiques power conceived as a possession which shifts between the researcher and the researched, and associated reflexive practices which question who holds more or less power at any given point in time and/or which consider how participants might be empowered. Such assumptions fail to contextualize research relationship power imbalances beyond the researcher-researched interaction in the immediate research setting, or to engage in reflexive analysis of broader relations of power (Day, 2012). A broader contextual understanding of power in the research relationship can be conceptualized by taking a Foucauldian approach whereby 'power is not something that is intrinsically held by persons; it is the effect of discursive struggles over the realm of meaning and production of knowledge ... [and] is distributed throughout social relationships' (Day, 2012: 67). Such a relational understanding of power enables consideration of the ways in which researchers and research participants are 'variously located within relations of power' (Day, 2012: 67). Orr and Bennett (2009) claim that they became 'more attuned' (p. 90) to the political dynamics underpinning their academic-practitioner research project, by engaging in 'an exercise in self-reflexivity' (p. 88) using Cunliffe's (2003) notion of radical reflexivity. They reflected upon and examined their research endeavours by, amongst other reflexive practices, exploring how their co-production of research 'involves the active interweaving and collision of different participant stories' and by 'surfacing and questioning' their relationships, as authors and co-producers, and with the research participants (Orr & Bennett, 2009: 88). For instance, they explain how, in response to Bennett's 'insider' status, Orr 'consciously and deliberately invoked his

outsider status – as a political resource’ (Orr & Bennett, 2009: 97) – in eliciting participant accounts. (For further reflexive practice examples of, and debate about, insider/outsider roles see, amongst others, Bourke, 2014; Day, 2012; and Srivastava, 2006.)

Although sharing epistemological assumptions of research as a process of constitutive negotiation, Rose (1997) might take exception to Orr and Bennett’s (2009: 87) claim to ‘make *transparent* the political processes that underpin our research’ (our italics) as she suggests that such ‘transparent reflexivity’ (p. 305) is impossible to achieve. Cousin (2010) makes a similar point when critiquing the notion of ‘positional reflexivity’ and its suggestion, if unproblematized, that a researcher’s privileged position/standpoint (e.g. feminist) comes with ‘a special pair of glasses’ (p. 11). By drawing on Butler’s (1990) Foucauldian account of performativity, Rose (1997: 311) challenges assumptions, about the researcher’s agency as conscious and knowable and about the ‘context’ or structure of power as visible and knowable, to argue for the impossibility of the search for positionality through transparent reflexivity. Rose’s (1997) argument is founded on the contradiction of understanding differences between the researcher and the researched as distances (for example, as higher or lower, central or marginal, insider or outsider) in a ‘landscape of power’ (p. 312). Rather than the ‘all-seeing’ researcher (p. 316) attempting to ‘map’ difference as distance between distinctly separate and conscious agents in a visible landscape of power, reflexivity becomes a process of ‘tracing’ how difference is constructed through mutually constitutive social relations between the researcher and the researched (pp. 313–14). From this relational understanding of position (Rose, 1997) and of research (Cunliffe, 2003, 2011; Hosking & Pluut, 2010; Rose, 1997), reflexivity acknowledges the ‘political dynamics’ of our research endeavours (Orr & Bennett, 2009: 87) and the ‘inherently political nature’ of our relationships with research participants (Cunliffe, 2011: 414), through which

positionalities, identities and knowledges emerge. In itself, reflexivity is not a means of overcoming issues of power. However, engaging with reflexivity, provoked by the following questions, may enable us ‘to surface issues about the politics of knowledge production and fieldwork’ (Orr & Bennett, 2009: 86).

- What role do positionality, identity, and power play in the process of knowledge production? (Day, 2012)
- What is my power relationship with the people I am researching? (Cousin, 2010)
- Am I researching *with* or *on* people? (Cousin, 2010: 11, emphasis in original)
- How does the relationship between the researchers (and the research participants) influence the research? (Orr & Bennett, 2009)

As an endnote, we acknowledge the issue of power in knowledge production applies equally to the researcher’s relationship with text (Day, 2012) as data (see, for example, Alvesson et al.’s (2008) discussion of reflexivity as textual practice). In their consideration of reflexive practices of writing about research, Alvesson et al. (2008: 483) describe multi-voicing practices which focus on ‘the authorial identity of the field worker’. These practices involve questioning the relationship between the researcher and research subjects and asking how the researcher can speak authentically of the Other’s experience (Alvesson et al., 2008: 483). We now end this discussion by exploring this type of question relating to issues of voice.

Voice

Reflexive practices which make explicit one’s positionality give context to the researcher’s voice (Day, 2012). In response to the crisis of representation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), notions of voice, authorship, and authenticity are questioned, as follows:

- Who speaks, if natural facts and social groups are unable to speak for themselves? (Pels, 2000: 2)

- Who is 'author'? Whose is the reflexive voice – the researcher's and/or 'subjects'? How can we recognize the interplay of voices without privileging ourselves and excluding the voices of others? (Cunliffe, 2003: 994)
- Can I speak authentically of the experience of the Other? If so, how? (Alvesson et al., 2008)
- How do I make sense of the lived experience of others? What are the consequences of making sense of and speaking for others? Whose voices does this sense making exclude? (Cunliffe, 2011)

Reflexivity 'systematically takes stock of and inserts the positions and perspectives of *spokespersons* in social-scientific reports about the world. Reflexive texts tend to reiterate the question: Who says so?' (Pels, 2000: 2, emphasis in original). Feminist and poststructuralist research has experimented with reflexive practices to 'forefront "voice" and the construction of our research texts' (Pillow, 2003: 186). For instance, multi-voicing reflexive practices attempt to 'decentre' authors as authority figures by opening up texts to multiple readings and/or by giving research subjects and/or readers a more active role in interpreting meaning (Alvesson et al., 2008). As a practical example in a doctoral study, Williams (2010) extended engagement with some of her research participants, beyond the initial data collection interview, by asking them to comment on her data interpretations as presented in a draft thesis chapter. In the final chapter of her thesis, when reflecting on the reflexive engagement of and debate with the research participants, Williams (2010) wrote:

All three participants affirmed my interpretations, adding comments or insights to particular points through the chapter, which I reflected upon and responded to, making changes or commenting on issues raised in chapter Five. I received positive feedback from Holly for following through on my initial invitation to review my interpretations. Holly commended me on ... sending my interpretations and engaging in a debate with the reflexive feedback I received in response. I also received affirmation from Sophia and Holly on how I had been sensitive to, and inclusive of participants' voices in my methodological choices. ... Sophia in her reflexive

follow up interview commented ... 'I think is a really good validation of your methodological choices because it gives the power to the interviewees'. (Williams, 2010: 283)

In line with the earlier discussion of transparent reflexivity, philosophical assumptions about power influence the qualitative researcher's intentions behind and strategies of using multi-voicing reflexive practices. Explicit articulation of assumptions enable defense of potential critiques of multi-voicing practices. For instance, practically, Alvesson et al. (2008: 488) highlight the limitations of giving 'a voice, let alone an equal voice' to all those involved with a research project and, philosophically, Pillow (2003: 185) contests the idea of 'giving' voice or power.

To summarize our discussions so far, we have considered how processes of reflexivity acknowledge that the researcher's motivation, role, position, identity, power and voice all impact on the 'doing' of qualitative research. We now turn to questions and issues relating to the reflexive 'evaluating' of qualitative research (Day, 2012; Johnson, 2015) and consider the case for criteria that fit the particular research project's philosophical positioning (Johnson, 2015; Johnson et al., 2006).

THE REFLEXIVE 'EVALUATING' OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Johnson (2015: 322) argues for reflexivity to be brought to 'the forefront of any research evaluation so as to enable criterion-logical judgements that fit the philosophical positioning of any research under consideration'. His call for a 'more permissive, pluralistic and reflexive approach to research evaluation' (Johnson, 2015: 320) is founded on the diversity of qualitative management research and its array of different epistemological and ontological stances. Johnson et al. (2006) elaborate this argument for the 'reflexive application of the appropriate

evaluation criteria' (p. 131) and suggest this requires qualitative researchers to: 'subject their philosophical assumptions to sustained reflection and evaluation through their confrontation with possible alternatives; deliberate the implications of their informed choices for research practice; be consistent in their actual engagements with management practices and be clear about how they meet specific but philosophically contingent evaluation criteria' (p. 148). Sandra provides a practical example of this type of reflexive application of 'contingent' criteria (Johnson, 2015; Johnson et al., 2006) to qualitative research evaluation in her PhD thesis (Corlett, 2009). For instance, she discussed the shifts in her understandings of different perspectives and the strength with which she asserted particular ontological and epistemological commitments over the course of study (Corlett, 2009). She considered methodological choices, including in a separate thesis section entitled 'implications of methodological decisions for this study' (p. 116). At various points in the thesis she reflected on how she had maintained a focus on her stated objective of 'tak[ing] a consciously reflexive approach throughout the research process' (p. 12). Finally, she detailed how she believed she had met philosophically contingent evaluation criteria which, in her case, involved complementing Lincoln and Guba's (1985) evaluative framework with other criteria appropriate to her narrative study. In opening discussion on the evaluation criteria, Sandra wrote:

This, as with any other research account, is a 'rhetorical construction' (Watson and Harris, 1999) and a crafted and shaped piece of writing (Watson and Harris, 1999; Watson, 1994; Golden-Biddle and Locke, 2007). So how can I persuade the reader that the research is trustworthy and its findings are 'worth taking account of' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 290)? (Corlett, 2009: 108)

This question is similar to others posed by scholars who reflexively consider the criteria for judging qualitative research.

- How does one put into practice the reflexive techniques and address methodological issues in a way that results in 'valid', good-quality social research? (Day, 2012: 61)
- How can I engage in reflexive 'theorizing' and 'explanation'? What is 'useful' knowledge and how can I produce it within a reflexive frame? (Cunliffe, 2003: 997)

Day (2012: 76) proposes that reflexivity problematizes 'the taken-for-granted use' of validity as a means of evaluating qualitative research. Like Johnson (2015) and his colleagues (Johnson et al., 2006), Day argues for the application of research project-specific evaluation criteria, by drawing on Cho and Trent's (2006: 319) proposition of a 'recursive, process-oriented view of validity'. As a practical example of inclusion of project-specific evaluation criteria, Williams (2010) explains why, given her concern for plurivocality (as discussed above), she used Seale's (1999) addition of authenticity to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) evaluation framework in her PhD study: 'Seale suggests the addition of authenticity ... brings the trustworthiness criteria closer to an appreciation of plurivocality' (Williams, 2010: 282). Not all qualitative scholars agree with the use of contingent criteria or, indeed, any 'definition' of qualitative criteria (see, for example, Symon & Cassell, 2012: 204 for further details of the 'criteriology debate') and advocate universal criteria frameworks, some of which include reflexivity. For example, Tracy's (2010: 840) universal end goal model for quality in qualitative research incorporates 'self-reflexivity about subjective values, biases, and inclinations of the researcher(s)' as a means/practice for achieving sincere and ethical research. Nevertheless, evidencing reflexivity as part of the 'doing' or writing up of qualitative research does not guarantee the quality of theory development and knowledge production (Day, 2012; Gabriel, 2013, 2015). Reflexivity needs to go beyond 'a box-ticking exercise' (Gabriel, 2015: 333), for instance "Did I question my

assumptions?” Ticked ... “Did I surface my values?” Ticked’ (Gabriel, 2013), as such a reductionist approach will not guarantee ‘good’ quality qualitative research. We propose that Sharon’s research with Gina Grandy (Mavin & Grandy, 2016), on developing ‘A Theory of Abject Appearance: Women elite leaders’ intra-gender “management” of bodies and appearance’, avoids such reductionist reflexive tendencies. The process of reflexivity involved critical discussions with each other to question the fundamental assumptions we had made in interpreting the women’s accounts, for instance did we just find what we wanted to find? As a result we did further work to re-analyse the data by the sectors the women leaders worked in and included this in the paper. We also included the interview questions that the women’s accounts were in response to. Thus we were able to highlight the quality of our research approach and more strongly argue for our theorization of Abject Appearance as emerging across the women’s accounts, regardless of organizational contexts. We also engaged in reflexivity as women researchers in-relation-to our women participants and included the following in the paper:

Like Sarah, many of the women elite leaders commented on women’s weight in their accounts. We also identified with the notion of women’s fat bodies being a source of disgust and attraction when in positions of power, as well as a site for women’s intra-gender relations. We reflected on our identity work associated with our own thin-fat-thin-fat bodies in-relation-to other women both inside and outside the work place. (Mavin & Grandy, 2016: 13)

This discussion of the reflexive ‘evaluating’ of qualitative research, and its introduction to the criteriology debate, completes our consideration of the three aspects of reflexivity. However, before concluding the chapter, we consider a further contemporary debate, about reflexivity as an individual and/or collective process, as the basis for identifying future developments informed by emergent reflexive research practice.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS: REFLEXIVITY AS COLLECTIVE PRACTICE

The concept of self-reflexivity and its ‘self-referential characteristic of “bending-back” some thought upon the self’ (Archer, 2009: 2) may convey the assumption of an individual activity. However, we agree with Gilmore and Kenny (2015: 55) that the prevalent assumption that self-reflexivity is ‘the responsibility of the lone researcher’ limits its understanding and practice. We have already referred to Orr and Bennett’s (2009) co-authored reflexive paper, produced following a ‘recursive’ process of reflexivity involving repeated critical exchange between the two researchers (p. 86). Gilmore and Kenny (2015) call for further innovative and meaningful methods, and detailed accounts of the practice, of collective reflexivity. They propose a ‘reflexive pair interview’ method involving ‘two (or more) “critical friends” working together’ (Gilmore & Kenny, 2015: 73). This collective approach was found to facilitate ‘a deeper reflection on the research process and in particular to our own selves-as-researchers’ (p. 73). Acknowledging the limitation that they carried out the pair interviews subsequent to their (individual) fieldwork, Gilmore and Kenny (2015) recommend use of the method as ongoing practice as a research project progresses. Examples of developing and employing collective reflexive processes and methods, as ongoing practice, arise from Sharon’s research with women elite leaders (Mavin & Grandy, 2016; Mavin et al., 2015) where the three research assistants completed individual reflexive templates as well as personal research diaries on their experiences of interviewing and then came together to discuss and consider the impact on the data collection. Sharon gives details about how the research assistants were impacted emotionally when conducting the interviews and how the co-authors responded emotionally in their re-readings of the data transcripts (Mavin & Grandy, 2016: 3).

Collective discussions about these ‘reflexive experiences’ guided them towards the research focus and enabled them to become ‘reflexively aware of the body as a site for identity work’ (p. 3). Furthermore, the collective reflexive practice they engaged in helped surface how they were ‘connected to the research, theoretically, experientially, [and] emotionally’ (Haynes, 2012: 78) and supports the view that reflexivity involves questioning emotions as well as assumptions (Gabriel, 2015; Munkejord, 2009). On a different project (Mavin & Williams, 2012), the same group of four researchers individually completed analysis of media texts, identified key discourses in the data and then completed an individual reflexive template. They then came together in pairs to discuss their findings, and to agree similarities and differences in the discourses and their reflexive templates. Finally, the two pairs came together to discuss the individual and paired reflexive templates and again agree similarities and differences in the discourses. These examples illustrate how collective reflexive methods, practised through dialogue with others, enabled individual researchers’ thoughts, feelings, doubts, dilemmas and possibilities to be surfaced and knowledge claims to be unsettled and settled, thereby facilitating a ‘turning back on oneself’ (Lawson, 1985: 9).

Beyond co-researchers and co-authors, examples of collective reflexive practice involve research participants (Corlett, 2012; Riach, 2009) and research users. For example, building on Riach’s (2009) exploration of participant-focused reflexivity in the research interview where participants may ‘consciously consider themselves in relation to their own production of knowledge’ (p. 360), Sandra illustrates how conceiving research as a dialogic process ‘with’ others may enable critical self-reflexivity and learning for research participants (Corlett, 2012). Attending to participant-focused reflexivity enables participants, as users of our research, to shape its direction and to evaluate its

theoretical and practical contributions. An opportunity for future development of collective reflexivity in management research comes from Brandon (2016), who engages users in participatory health research (PHR) (see rwire.co.uk). PHR has gone beyond models of service user consultation through the positioning of service users as experts in their own circumstances. This is a fundamental relocation of power towards service users as they become ‘co-producers’ of research (Realpe & Wallace, 2010). Therefore, moving from research participants in management research to user-led, co-produced research projects builds on relational understandings of research, and of researcher/researched positionality, which opens up opportunities for further development of theory and practice of reflexivity as collective practice.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have discussed understandings of research reflexivity, as processes and practices involving the reflexive ‘thinking’, ‘doing’ and ‘evaluating’ of qualitative management research. Although we have presented discussion of these reflexive processes and practices in distinct parts of the chapter, we see them as ‘interconnected and mutually related, [and] not necessarily separate and discrete facets of reflexivity’ (Haynes, 2012: 85). We have argued that epistemological assumptions influence reflexivity practices and the researcher’s positionality on issues relating to representation and truth, to the researcher’s role and power relations with others, and to criteria for evaluating qualitative research. However, Tomkins and Eatough (2010) are critical of coupling reflexivity with one’s overall epistemology because of the risk of missing out, in practice terms, on the richness and diversity of reflexivity theory. In response to their critique, we hope the chapter has provided some insights into the debates surrounding

Table 23.1 Reflexivity in qualitative research

<i>The reflexive 'thinking' of qualitative research (Day, 2012)</i>	<i>The reflexive 'doing' of qualitative research (Day, 2012)</i>	<i>The reflexive 'evaluating' of qualitative research (Day, 2012)</i>
<i>Questions about epistemological position and assumptions</i> • What are my assumptions about the nature of reality and who we are as humans? (Cunliffe, 2011) • What do I see as the nature of knowledge? (Cunliffe, 2011) <i>Questions about representation and truth</i> • In my representations of the social world, what are my underlying assumptions about the production of knowledge – how do I know, and who can claim to know? ... who can make claims to 'know' and represent others using qualitative approaches? (Day, 2012) • How has the research question defined and limited what can be 'found'? What findings/insights do I hope to generate from this question? On what basis will these findings/insights contribute to 'knowledge', i.e. what kinds of knowledges am I producing? How will the resultant knowledges function to shape the world, i.e. what 'truth claims' will I make? (Cassell et al., 2005) • What are the different ways in which a phenomenon can be understood and how do they produce different knowledge(s)? (Alvesson et al., 2008)	<i>Methodological and method reflexivity questions</i> • What research method/s is/are used? (Cunliffe, 2011; James & Vinnicombe, 2002) • What is the purpose of the methods? (Cassell et al., 2005) • What is the impact of the research method(s) on the research? (Johnson & Duberley, 2003) • What constitutes 'data'? How do I interpret the 'data'? (Cunliffe, 2011) • What data do I 'collect'? How do I collect and analyse the data? How do I manage 'objectivity' in the data analysis? (James & Vinnicombe, 2002) • What data have I chosen to include and to leave out in my presentation of findings/interpretations? <i>Self-reflexivity questions about researcher motivations</i> • Why am I undertaking the research topic I have selected? What are my personal motivations? What are my personal and political reasons for undertaking my research? What personal experiences do I have related to my research topic? (James & Vinnicombe, 2002) • What (or who) has prompted the research and why? How is the research shaped by my own personal interest and, if applicable, the interests of a sponsoring organization? Has this influenced the framing of the research question and the context in which the research is carried out? (James & Vinnicombe, 2002) • What is the motivation for undertaking this research? How am I connected to the research, theoretically, experientially, emotionally? And what effect will this have on my approach? (Haynes, 2012) <i>Self-reflexivity questions about researcher role, identity and power relations with others</i> • What is my (expected) role as the researcher? (Cassell et al., 2005; James & Vinnicombe, 2002; Johnson & Duberley, 2008) • What effects does my role have on how the research is conducted? (Cassell et al., 2005) • What are my relationships with research subjects/participants? (Cunliffe, 2011)	<i>Questions about criteria</i> • How do I put into practice the reflexive techniques and address methodological issues in a way that results in valid, good-quality social research? (Day, 2012) • How can I engage in reflexive 'theorizing' and 'explanation'? What is 'useful' knowledge and how can I produce it within a reflexive frame? (Cunliffe, 2003)

- How could the research question be investigated differently, e.g. from a different epistemological perspective? What different insights may be made by taking a different epistemological perspective? (Cassell et al., 2005)

Questions about positionality, identity and power

- What role do positionality, identity and power play in the process of knowledge production? (Day, 2012)
- What is my power relationship with the people I am researching? (Cousin, 2010)
- Am I researching *with* or *on* people? (Cousin, 2010)
- How does the relationship between the researchers (and the research participants) influence the research? (Orr & Bennett, 2009)

Questions about voice

- Who speaks, if natural facts and social groups are unable to speak for themselves? (Pels, 2000)
- Who is 'author'? Whose is the reflexive voice – the researcher's and/or 'subjects'? How can we recognize the interplay of voices without privileging ourselves and excluding the voices of others? (Cunliffe, 2003)
- Can I speak authentically of the experience of the Other? If so, how? (Alvesson et al., 2008)
- How do I make sense of the lived experience of others? What are the consequences of making sense of and speaking for others? Whose voices does this sense-making exclude? (Cunliffe, 2011)

Developed and extended from: Alvesson et al. (2008); Cassell et al. (2005); Cousin (2010); Cunliffe (2003, 2011); Day (2012); Hardy et al. (2001); Haynes (2012); James and Vinnicombe (2002); Johnson and Duberley (2003); Orr and Bennett (2009); Pels (2000).

the theory and practice of reflexivity and has opened up opportunities for critical self-scrutiny of research practice, through the questions posed and collated in the Appendix and through the practical examples of different processes of individual and collective reflexivity from our own and others' work.

Alvesson et al. (2008: 497) conclude that, just as 'knowledge more generally is a product of linguistic, political, and institutional influences, so too is reflexivity. ... what we – as members of a research community – know to be reflexivity is shaped by practices carried out by researchers in producing texts which are accepted as being reflexive'. We acknowledge we have given a 'situated' and partial account of reflexivity theory and practice, informed by our epistemological assumptions founded on social constructionism and poststructuralism, and by the reflexive practices in which we have engaged. Furthermore our broader research interests, for instance in the area of identity, may have influenced the attention we have given to some debates and questions, such as the role of identity and power in processes of knowledge production. Also, as committed as we are to reflexivity and researcher positionality, we do not see reflexivity as 'a universal cure-all' (Day, 2012: 82) for the challenges involved in conducting qualitative management research. Indeed, excessive reflexivity may, for instance, reduce our practice to paralysis or lead us to self-indulgence and narcissism (Weick, 1999). Nevertheless, we see the value of reflexivity in its ability to bring epistemological, methodological and criteriological challenges to the forefront as a means of recognising how we, as qualitative researchers, shape the research we do, the knowledge we produce and its subsequent political effects.

Reflexivity in research can be uncomfortable but, building on Gina Grandy, Ruth Simpson and Sharon's views (Grandy et al., 2015: 347), we see 'that our richest and most illuminating research encounters are those that make us feel uncomfortable. If we

acknowledge the discomfort and reflexively work through it ... we argue that as researchers and practitioners we garner unique insights into the complexity of social reality'. Therefore, we continue to advocate for reflexivity and researcher/researched positionality and end with two final questions, adapted from Cunliffe (2011: 416), to encourage critical self-scrutiny of our individual and collective research practices and processes:

- Where do my/our ideas on reflexivity fit?
- Are any of these approaches [and questions] appropriate for my/our research or how can I/we find my/our own approach?

APPENDIX A: THOUGHT PROVOKING QUESTIONS ABOUT REFLEXIVITY IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

As you read the questions in the table 23.1, critically self-reflect on these overarching questions:

- Where do my/our ideas on reflexivity fit?
- Are any of these questions appropriate for my/our research/or how can I/we find my/our own approach? (Cunliffe, 2011: 416)

REFERENCES

- Alvesson, M. (2003) 'Beyond neopositivists, romantics, and localists: A reflexive approach to interviews in organizational research', *Academy of Management Review*, 28(1): 13–33.
- Alvesson, M., Hardy, C., & Harley, B. (2008) 'Reflecting on reflexivity: Reflexive textual practices in Organization and Management Theory', *Journal of Management Studies*, 45(3): 480–501.
- Alvesson, M., & Sköldbberg, K. (2009) *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*. 2nd edn. London: Sage.
- Archer, M. S. (ed.) (2009) *Conversations About Reflexivity*. Abingdon: Routledge.

- Bourke, B. (2014) 'Positionality: Reflecting on the research process', *The Qualitative Report*, 19(33): 1–9.
- Brandon, T. (2016) Recovery and Wellbeing through Involvement in Research and Evaluation (Rwire). Funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Research for Patient Benefit Programme (Programme Grant PB-PG-0808-17269). www.rwire.co.uk/about-us/
- Bryman, A., & Cassell, C. (2006) 'The researcher interview: A reflexive perspective', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 1(1): 41–55.
- Butler, J. (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge.
- Cassell, C., Symon, G., Johnson, P., & Bishop, V. (2005) ESRC Benchmarking Good Practice in Qualitative Management Research, Workshop 3: Reflexivity. www.restore.ac.uk/Benchmarking/workshop/
- Chia, R. (1995) 'From modern to postmodern organizational analysis', *Organization Studies*, 16(4): 579–604.
- Cho, J., & Trent, A. (2006) 'Validity in qualitative research revisited', *Qualitative Research*, 6(3): 319–340.
- Corlett, S. (2009) *Professionals Becoming Managers: Personal Predicaments, Vulnerability and Identity Work*, PhD dissertation, Northumbria University, Newcastle, UK.
- Corlett, S. (2012) 'Participant learning in and through research as reflexive dialogue: Being "struck" and the effects of recall', *Management Learning*, 44(5): 453–469.
- Cousin, G. (2010) 'Positioning positionality: The reflexive turn', in M. Savin-Baden and C. Howell Major (eds.), *New Approaches to Qualitative Research: Wisdom and Uncertainty*. London: Routledge. pp. 9–18.
- Crotty, M. (1998) *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*. London: Sage.
- Cunliffe, A. L. (2003) 'Reflexive inquiry in organizational research: Questions and possibilities', *Human Relations*, 56(8): 983–1003.
- Cunliffe, A. L. (2011) 'Why complicate a done deal? Bringing reflexivity into management research', in C. Cassell and B. Lee (eds.), *Challenges and Controversies in Management Research*. London: Routledge. pp. 404–418.
- Day, S. (2012) 'A reflexive lens: Exploring dilemmas of qualitative methodology through the concept of reflexivity', *Qualitative Sociology Review*, 8(1): 60–85.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011) 'Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research', in N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 4th edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. pp.1–20.
- Gabriel, Y. (2013) When reflexivity is not enough – Try imagination! www.yiannisgabriel.com/2013/04/when-reflexivity-is-not-enough-try.html#1/2013/04/when-reflexivity-is-not-enough-try.html
- Gabriel, Y. (2015) 'Reflexivity and beyond – a plea for imagination in qualitative research methodology', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 10(4): 332–336.
- Gergen, M. M., & Gergen, K. J. (2000) 'Qualitative inquiry: Tensions and transformations', in N. K. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. pp. 1025–1046.
- Gill, J., & Johnson, P. (2010) *Research Methods for Managers*. 4th edn. London: Sage.
- Gilmore, S., & Kenny, K. (2015) 'Work-worlds colliding: Self-reflexivity, power and emotion in organizational ethnography', *Human Relations*, 68(1): 55–78.
- Goffman, E. (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Doubleday.
- Golden-Biddle, K., & Locke, K. (2007) *Composing Qualitative Research*. 2nd edn. London: Sage.
- Grandy, G., Simpson, R., & Mavin, S. (2015) 'What we can learn from de-valued and marginalised work/research', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 10(4): 344–349.
- Harding, S. (1987) 'Introduction: Is there a feminist method?', in S. Harding (ed.), *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. pp. 1–14.
- Hardy, C., Phillips, N., & Clegg, S. (2001) 'Reflexivity in organization and management theory: A study of the production of the research subject', *Human Relations*, 54(5): 531–560.

- Harré, R., & van Langenhove, L. (eds.) (1999) *Positioning Theory: Moral Contexts of Intentional Action*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Haynes, K. (2011) 'Tensions in (re)presenting the self in reflexive autoethnographical research', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 6(2): 134–149.
- Haynes, K. (2012) 'Reflexivity in qualitative research', in G. Symon and C. Cassell (eds.), *Qualitative Organizational Research: Core Methods and Current Challenges*. London: Sage. pp. 72–89.
- Hibbert, P., Coupland, C., & MacIntosh, R. (2010) 'Reflexivity: Recursion and relationality in organizational research processes', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 5(1): 47–62.
- Holland, R. (1999) 'Reflexivity', *Human Relations*, 52(4): 463–484.
- Hosking, D. M., & Pluut, B. (2010) '(Re)constructing reflexivity: A relational constructionist approach', *The Qualitative Report*, 15(1): 59–75.
- James, K., & Vinnicombe, S. (2002) 'Acknowledging the individual in the researcher', in D. Partington (ed.), *Essential Skills for Management Research*. London: Sage. pp. 84–98.
- Johnson, P. (2015) 'Evaluating qualitative research: Past, present and future', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 10(4): 320–324.
- Johnson, P., Buehring, A., Cassell, C., & Symon, G. (2006) 'Evaluating qualitative management research: Towards a contingent criteriology', *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 8(3): 131–156.
- Johnson, P., & Duberley, J. (2000) *Understanding Management Research*. London: Sage.
- Johnson, P., & Duberley, J. (2003) 'Reflexivity in management research', *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(5): 1279–1303.
- Lawson, H. (1985) *Reflexivity: The Post-modern Predicament*. London: Hutchinson.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Macbeth, D. (2001) 'On "reflexivity" in qualitative research: Two readings, and a third', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(1): 35–68.
- Marcus, G. E. (1994) 'What comes (just) after "Post"? The case of ethnography', in N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds.), *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. pp. 563–574.
- Mavin, S. (2001) *The Gender Culture Kaleidoscope: Images of Women's Identity and Place in Organization*, PhD Thesis (unpublished), Northumbria University, Newcastle, UK.
- Mavin, S., & Grandy, G. (2013) 'Doing gender well and differently in dirty work: A case of exotic dancing', *Gender, Work & Organization*, 20(3): 232–251.
- Mavin, S., & Grandy, G. (2016) 'A theory of abject appearance: Women elite leaders' intra-gender "management" of bodies and appearance', *Human Relations*, 69(5): 1095–1120.
- Mavin, S., & Williams, J. (2012) *A Gender Framework for Analysis of Media Representations: A Study of 'Influential Leaders in the North East'*, paper presented at the Gender, Work & Organization Conference, 27–29 June, Keele University, UK.
- Mavin, S., Williams, J., Bryans, P., & Patterson, N. (2015) "'Woman as project": Key issues for women who want to get on', in A. M. Broadbridge and S. L. Fielden (eds.), *Handbook of Gendered Careers in Management: Getting In, Getting On, Getting Out*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing. pp. 305–321.
- May, T. (2002) 'Introduction: Transformation in principles and practice', in T. May (ed.), *Qualitative Research in Action*. London: Sage. pp. 1–14.
- Milner, H. R. (2007) 'Race, culture, and researcher positionality: Working through dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen', *Educational Researcher*, 36(7): 388–400.
- Munkejord, K. (2009) 'Methodological emotional reflexivity: The role of researcher emotions in grounded theory research', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 4(2): 151–167.
- Orr, K., & Bennett, M. (2009) 'Reflexivity in the co-production of academic-practitioner research', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 4(1): 85–102.
- Pels, D. (2000) 'Reflexivity, one step up', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 17(3): 1–25.
- Pillow, W. (2003) 'Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as

- methodological power in qualitative research', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(2): 175–196.
- Realpe, A., & Wallace, L. M. (2010) *What is co-production?* London: The Health Foundation.
- Riach, K. (2009) 'Exploring participant-centred reflexivity in the research interview', *Sociology*, 43(2): 356–370.
- Rivera, K. D., & Tracy, S. J. (2014) 'Embodying emotional dirty work: A messy text of patrolling the border', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 9(3): 201–222.
- Rose, G. (1997) 'Situating knowledges: Positionality, reflexivities and other tactics', *Progress in Human Geography*, 21(3): 305–320.
- Seale, C. (1999) *The Quality of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
- Srivastava, P. (2006) 'Reconciling multiple researcher positionalities and languages in international research', *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 1(3): 210–222.
- Symon, G., & Cassell, C. (2012) 'Assessing qualitative research', in G. Symon and C. Cassell (eds.), *Qualitative Organizational Research: Core Methods and Current Challenges*. London: Sage. pp. 204–223.
- Tomkins, L., & Eatough, V. (2010) 'Towards an integrative reflexivity in organisational research', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 5(2): 162–181.
- Tracy, S. J. (2010) 'Qualitative quality: Eight "big tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10): 837–851.
- Watson, T. J. (1994) 'Managing, crafting and researching: Words, skill and imagination in shaping management research', *British Journal of Management*, 5(s1): S77–S87.
- Watson, T. J. (2008) 'Managing identity: Identity work, personal predicaments and structural circumstances', *Organization*, 15(1): 121–143.
- Watson, T. J., & Harris, P. (1999) *The Emergent Manager*. London: Sage.
- Weick, K. E. (1999). 'Theory construction as disciplined reflexivity: Tradeoffs in the 90s', *Academy of Management Review*, 24(4): 797–806.
- Williams, J. (2010) *What can disabled academics' career experiences offer to studies of organization?*, PhD dissertation, Northumbria University, Newcastle, UK.
- Willig, C. (2001) *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Muted Masculinities – Ethical and Personal Challenges for Male Qualitative Researchers Interviewing Women

Fahad M. Hassan, Caroline Gatrell
and Carolyn Downs

Interviews, like any other interaction, always take place in a 'gendered context' – the context of either gender similarity or gender difference.... The question is therefore not *if* gender makes a difference but, rather, *how* does gender matter? (Williams & Heikes, 1993: 283, emphasis added)

INTRODUCTION

A rich array of guidance exists regarding the ethical dilemmas experienced among women interviewing women, and by women interviewing men, in qualitative research. By contrast (albeit with important exceptions such as Ortiz, 2005; Broom, et al., 2009), the range of methodological discussions about how men may best manage the ethical complexities of interviewing women is narrow. This chapter contributes to understandings around gender, ethics and qualitative interviewing by addressing the ethical questions and interpersonal dynamics which occur

when men interview women. In so doing, it considers the question raised by Williams and Heikes, above, on '*how*' gender matters in qualitative research.

Specifically, the chapter focuses on a UK study on motherhood, part-time work and professional careers, for which Fahad Hassan was the principal (male) investigator. This role involved Fahad in the sourcing and interviewing of 13 highly qualified British Pakistani and White British mothers who were working part-time in senior, professional roles. In designing and conducting such research, Fahad, who is from Pakistan and married with children, and his two female co-investigators (Caroline and Carolyn, White British and also married with children) were faced with new challenges (and limited guidance) regarding the ethical approach of a research project in which a male researcher would interview female interviewees on a potentially sensitive topic involving personal lives.

GENDER AND QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

Inspired by the concerns of Oakley (1981) and Graham (1983) about the need to ‘shatter the silence’ of women’s voices (Graham, 1983: 135), a wealth of advice exists on the ethics and researcher experiences of woman to woman interviewing, particularly within a feminist context. Such guidance foregrounds women’s experience as a priority and often conveys dissatisfaction with quantitative paradigms (which are seen historically to render women’s lives ‘invisible’, Edwards & Ribbens, 1998). A feminist ethics of equity and the potential benefits of rapport between female interviewers and their interviewees has been much debated.

In addition to the above literatures on women interviewing women, a smaller but growing body of research reflects upon the ethical aspects of cross-gender interviewing. The majority of these literatures examine ethics from the perspective of women interviewers researching men. The consequent ethical research designs are frequently interpreted as embracing the well-being and safety of the female interviewer, alongside assumptions that male power dynamics might disadvantage female researchers. For example, Reinharz (1992: 42) describes women interviewers as often ‘studying up’ when researching men. Reinharz suggests that men will be less forthcoming than women respondents when it comes to sharing emotional experiences with women interviewers. She also expresses concerns that female interviewers might demand less of male than female interviewees, due to potential gendered power differentials between women researchers and male respondents. McKee and O’Brien (1983: 156) reflect upon the need for women interviewers to frame their interview schedules and questions carefully when interviewing men, so as to avoid the ‘unnecessary complications’ of potential sexual harassment. Arguably, while it is advisable for women

interviewers to take precautions regarding personal safety, such guidance could also be seen to raise ethical concerns about equitable treatment of male interviewees. Gatrell (2006) reflects on the ethical dilemmas confronting woman researchers concerned with managing their own safety while trying to treat all research participants fairly, applying standards such as reciprocity (Oakley, 1981) equally to everyone and assuming that the extent of interviewee self-disclosure will not necessarily relate to gender.

What is often missing from such important discussions around gender and qualitative interviewing, are analyses of the ethical challenges posed for male researchers interviewing female respondents. How might men interviewing women ensure that women’s voices are heard? (An important question for our research in which we sought to prioritise women’s voices.) How might men ensure that female interviewees feel comfortable and safe in the interview situation, and what issues do male researchers face when seeking to recruit female participants?

Below, drawing upon a research log kept by Fahad as he progressed his study into professionally employed mothers working part-time, we describe how he experienced the recruitment of participants and the conducting of interviews. We explain how the research design and ethical approaches were adapted in order to meet the requirements of both researcher and interviewees. We share and reflect upon the problems we experienced, as well as how we negotiated these.

We begin by outlining in more detail what the research project was about. We then explore how the research design was crafted to take account of the ethical dilemmas facing a male researcher seeking to interview a sample of women on a potentially sensitive topic. In this regard, we give an account of how Fahad chose Ortiz’s (2005) concept of muted masculinity as a source of guidance. We conclude with a discussion on how gender matters in qualitative interviews, arguing

that ethical sensitivity in qualitative research would be enhanced if male researchers undertaking qualitative interviews were to share and reflect upon their experiences wherever possible.

THE RESEARCH TOPIC: PART-TIME WORK AMONG PROFESSIONALLY EMPLOYED BRITISH PAKISTANI AND WHITE BRITISH MOTHERS

The research was designed to build upon a wealth of research on women and employment following the gender equality legislation of the 1970s (discussed in Crompton, 1997; Evetts, 2000; Hochschild, 2001; Blair-Loy, 2003; Gatrell & Cooper, 2008). As Gatrell (2005) observes, research centring on how women manage motherhood and careers has flourished. Debates around maternity and employment are central to a range of sociological, psychological, feminist and management literature (Epstein et al., 1999; Evetts, 2000; Hochschild, 2001; Gatrell & Cooper, 2008; Radcliffe & Cassell, 2013).

A significant element within this canon of research is the work of Blair-Loy (2003), who argues that, while part-time working may often seem like the only option available to professional mothers combining career with motherhood, such working patterns often lead to women being undervalued in organisations. Part-time work is consequently detrimental to women's career advancement. The argument made by Blair-Loy (2003) is important because statistical data (ONS, 2013: 1) reveals a stark difference between participation of men and women in part-time work. The UK Office for National Statistics notes that, while there have been dramatic increases in the numbers of women in work over the previous thirty years, the proportion of women working part-time has remained reasonably steady at 42–45% between 1983 and 2013 (ONS, 2013: 1). Furthermore, the numbers

illustrate that most of the part-time workers are mothers of young children.

With certain exceptions (e.g. Gatrell, 2007; Haynes, 2008), the wealth of quantitative data on part-time working amongst women is not matched by a detailed analysis underpinning reasons why the proportion of women working part-time remains fairly constant, despite improvements in the availability of childcare and increasing numbers of organisations offering family-friendly policies. Possibly, the relative lack of a qualitative, research-based understanding of motherhood, career and part-time working lends strength to unfair beliefs that mothers working part-time are less committed to their paid work than full-time workers (as argued by Hakim, 2000). It has been observed how such claims perpetuate, within organisations, the under-valuing of part-time women workers with children, even if such women are highly qualified, diligent and deeply committed to their employment (Gatrell, 2005). Given the relative limitations of quantitative research exploring the lived experience of professional women working part-time, and the associated organisational tendencies to under-value this group, it seemed important to look qualitatively into the underpinning values, attitudes and behaviours of professional mothers who are adopting part-time work as an active strategy for managing the complexities of combining career with motherhood.

In a desire to understand in-depth the experiences of professionally employed mothers working part-time in the UK, we focused on two groups: White British and British Pakistani professional women with children. Significantly, there are very low numbers of British Pakistani women working in a professional capacity compared to other groups of British professional women. British Pakistani women are the largest proportion of economically inactive women in the UK, with 60% economically inactive as compared to 20% or fewer women of other groups (www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census-analysis/

ethnicity-and-the-labour-market), and those who are economically active mostly work as packers, bottlers, canners, fillers and sewing machinists (<https://www.economist.com/news/britain/21568733-hidden-explanation-britains-surprising-job-numbers-bangladeshi-and-pakistani-women-are>). The UK Office of National Statistics also reports (ibid.) that 49% of British Pakistani women who are economically active work part-time, with 20% of them working less than 15 hours a week. These figures illustrate the scarcity of British Pakistani women working in a professional capacity.

British Pakistani professionally employed women are important not only because they are under-represented and under-researched, but also because they feel under-valued at work even when working full-time (Arifeen & Gatrell, 2013). (White British professional women are likely to feel most under-valued should they embark on part-time working having previously worked full-time (Gatrell, 2005).) The lack of research (especially regarding British Pakistani women) suggested a need to explore the experiences of both groups regarding part-time work. The study is, arguably, unusual in seeking to give voice in particular to highly qualified, ethnic minority British Pakistani professional mothers who opted for part-time work as a means of combining career with motherhood.

Where the study may be unprecedented in its approach, however, is in having a non-British, Pakistani male leading the study of the trajectories of career and motherhood among part-time professional British Pakistani and White British mothers. Below, we reflect on how gender ‘matters’ in qualitative interviews (Williams & Heikes, 1993). We show how, in crafting the research design, close consideration was given regarding how the ethical principles of prioritising women respondents’ voices could be pursued. In so doing, we focus particularly on the ethics of gender and power in cross-gender interviews, potential reciprocity between male

interviewer and female interviewees (Oakley, 1981; Edwards & Ribbens, 1998) and the use of ‘muted masculinities’ as a vehicle for reflecting upon gendered power relations between researcher and the researched.

However, we then go on to reflect upon how a lack of guidance on male to female interviewing in qualitative research may have contributed in producing some unexpected (and sometimes frustrating) outcomes. These unanticipated outcomes obliged us to adapt and reconsider the ethical approach regarding gendered and cultural expectations of interviewees, safety of interviewees and, especially, recruitment and access to the potential research participants.

Ethics, the Research Design and the Principal Investigator

The complex nature of the research topic required a phenomenological approach to ensure that the lived experience of participants was at the centre of the research on all occasions. Phenomenology may be described as a qualitative research technique that seeks to make explicit the implicit structures and meanings of human experience (Atkinson, 1972). This research needed to understand the implicit constraints on the careers of professionals who were also mothers; such constraints leading them to opt for part-time work as a means of combining maternity with employment. This approach was based on the views of Adam et al. (2005), who maintain that, despite equal opportunities legislation and policy, many discriminatory practices still exist (e.g. firms not employing younger women who might become pregnant). Given that existing discrimination against working mothers may not be explicit but implicit, Adam et al. (2005) emphasise the need for in-depth, qualitative studies among a small sample to understand the reasons behind such discrimination. The lives and lived experience of the women in the sample were complex and multi-faceted, requiring a phenomenological

approach, engaging with mothers in-depth (Stone, 1972). For these reasons, data was collected from mothers using face-to-face, in-depth interviews. In recruiting mothers, we sought women who had as a minimum a first degree qualification, and who were employed part-time in a professional capacity, mirroring Gatrell's (2007) study on mothers and part-time employment. All the research participants had thus opted for part-time work as a means of combining their career with motherhood and came from various professions, e.g. medicine, law, higher education, accounting, marketing, information technology, management and engineering.

As the research design progressed, we worked to develop a robust ethical framework which could address how gender differences between researcher and interviewees might 'matter' in the qualitative interviews. We were especially concerned (given our intention that women's voices should be prioritised) with the observation by Oakley (1999) and others (Ortiz, 2005) that it is important for qualitative researchers to consider the effect of their own gender when designing research methodology. We thus reflected closely on the ethics of potential gendered power differentials in male to female qualitative interviews. Attempts to achieve potential reciprocity between male interviewer and female interviewees formed a core part of the research design. Oakley (1999) posits that researchers have an ethical responsibility to pay close attention to interviews as both exploring gender issues and as gender scripts in themselves. Gatrell (2006: 244, emphasis added), in her research on women interviewing men, suggests that '*it seemed important to consider my position in relation both to cross-gender, and single sex interviewing*'. Gatrell's (ibid., emphasis added) suggestion is consistent with Rose (1985: 77), who asserts that no qualitative researcher could sufficiently claim himself or herself *neutral* because '*there is no neutrality*'. Therefore, it is argued that all qualitative researchers ought to be aware of the extent of their biases

(gender, insider/outsider status and ethnicity), and the impact of those biases on the research process to appreciate what they do.

It was, therefore, important for Fahad to develop understanding of his 'researcher context' (gender, ethnicity and insider/outsider status) as a qualitative researcher in line with the suggestions of Ortiz (2005) and Gatrell (2006). Fahad's position is as follows: he is a father; a male, non-British, Pakistani qualitative researcher who planned to interview professional British Pakistani and White British mothers who have/had opted for the part-time work with the intent of combining career with motherhood.

Cross-Gender Interviewing: Male Interviewer and Female Interviewees

Oakley (1981) and Ribbens (1994) underline the ethical importance of making qualitative interviewees feel comfortable with the research process. They indicate that, as a means of prioritising women's voices, researchers must encourage the development of rapport as part of an ethical approach to qualitative research with female subjects. Williams and Heikes (1993) observe how the vast majority of qualitative researchers use a 'same-gender' approach to interviewing due to the belief that they may achieve 'rapport' with less difficulty than if they were interviewing the opposite gender. Rubin and Rubin (2011) and Lohan (2000) observe how women interviewing men is a common preference perhaps because male research participants perceive women interviewers to be more attentive to emotions and the details of personal life, enabling men to display emotions feeling less embarrassment than if asked to share such feelings with a man.

In comparison to same-gender interviewing and female to male interviews, we have noted that it is relatively uncommon for male qualitative researchers to conduct face-to-face in-depth research interviews with

female interviewees to discuss personal and emotional issues. However, there are some notable exceptions to this, in particular studies by Ortiz (2005), Broom et al. (2009) and Peyton and Gatrell (2013). Our principal ethical concern was to address how the gender of the researcher might impact on the interview process and whether this might compromise the foregrounding of women's voices. Ensuring that female participants felt comfortable and enabled in Fahad's presence was the priority, with the notion of 'rapport' being an ideal to which we aspired. Siedman (2013: 13, emphasis added) warns that '*Males interviewing females can be overbearing*', and, bearing this advice in mind, we looked for a means by which we might minimise any sense of power differential between male interviewer and female interviewees in the sense described by Oakley (1981) and Reinharz (1992).

As an ethical approach for managing the interview process, Fahad chose Ortiz's (2005) concept of 'muted masculinity' as a model for reflection and a source of guidance. Muted masculinity is a gender management strategy which seeks to go beyond assumptions that gender matters (and might be problematic) in male to female interviews. Rather, it tackles the question raised by Williams and Heikes (1993) about '*how does gender matter?*' seeking to address how gender differences may be acknowledged and managed for the benefit of researchers and the researched in male to female interviews.

Fahad thus drew upon Ortiz's (2005) concept 'muted masculinity' to help promote a sense of equity between himself and his women interviewees, which we hoped would accord status to the voices of women interviewees. The explicit purpose of 'muted masculinity' as a gender management strategy is to avoid the display of hegemonic masculinity (in which men retain dominant roles in society) in male to female qualitative interviews. In our interpretation, muted masculinity further promotes and enables researcher reflection on the interviewee/interviewer

relationship from a gender perspective (Ortiz, 2005, adopted this stance for a long-term research study on the lives of the wives of professional male athletes). The rationale of Ortiz's concept of muted masculinity was reconstruction of his gender display as being 'less' masculine than most of the male professional athletes because the wives of male professional athletes were quite familiar with hegemonic masculinities. They often 'disapproved' of the display of hegemonic masculinity by their husbands, yet may have felt constrained regarding discussion of personal experience. Ortiz (2005: 270) maintains that he muted his masculinity by using 'various dramaturgical strategies' involving speech, appearance and behaviours, including mannerisms, demeanour and facial expression:

as an ethnographic strategy, this method (muted masculinity) of doing a non-hegemonic version of masculinity involved both my body image and self-image. I was aware of and was able to manage and display the type of masculinity that would be defined as appropriate by these couples. Muted masculinity involved the degenderization and regenderization of my male self. (2005: 270–271)

For the purposes of his interviews with employed mothers, Fahad sought to draw upon the concept of 'muted masculinity' as a means of thinking around how he might prioritise women's voices, 'muting' his masculine identity for the purpose of gaining rapport with participants during qualitative interviews (Ortiz, 2005). As noted above, Ortiz advocates a dramaturgical approach, in which mannerisms, language and embodied behaviours are muted. We demonstrate below, however, how Fahad found his experience of adopting such 'muted' behaviour different in practice from that of Ortiz because he did not, in the event, need to draw upon the dramaturgical techniques. However, the gender management strategy of 'muted masculinity' was useful in facilitating explicit recognition of the masculinities of the lead researcher throughout the research process.

The adoption of 'muted masculinity' was not the only arena in which Fahad's

experience departed from what had been anticipated in the research design. Perhaps due to the intense nature of the sensitive topic and his identity as a male, qualitative interviewer, some issues arose for which he was unprepared – in particular, the difficulties faced by a male researcher in recruiting and retaining female subjects. Given that ethical approaches to qualitative research foreground the well-being of researchers, as well as the researched (McKee & O'Brien, 1983), it was also important for Fahad to reflect on how he was affected by the research process. Such reflection was achieved through his research log, facilitating discussion regarding the ethical dilemmas, for a male researcher, of collecting data from British Pakistani and White British mothers. It is Fahad's experiences from his research log which we now share.

CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH: RECRUITING RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS IN MALE TO FEMALE INTERVIEWS

A significant proportion of qualitative studies on mothers rely upon informal channels, often via snowballing, to produce a sample willing and available to discuss often personal and sensitive issues around motherhood and family. Perhaps such informal approaches might also contribute to a sense of well-being and safe space among and between interviewers and interviewees in situations where both parties, even if previously not known to one another, are female and at least share contacts in common (Gatrell, 2005).

While the use of informal channels might have been ideal, this did not seem at first to be an option for Fahad because when he began his research, none appeared to be available to him. As a result, he embarked upon his search for research participants through formal channels, writing invitation letters to universities and various Chambers

of Commerce, Women's Organisations and Research Centres. The result of placing requests through such 'formal' channels was either 'no' or a polite 'unavailable' response. Where reasons were given for declining to be interviewed, these centred on discomfort with the male gender of the Interviewer, which was mentioned in the 'research invitation'. (The ethical principle of this research required that we explicitly mention the gender of the Interviewer to avoid taking the interviewees by surprise.) The mentioning of the Interviewer was also aligned with our intention of providing 'open and complete' information about the research project to the interviewees, seeking to 'decrease the ambiguity that surrounds the research interviews' (Cassell, 2005: 167). This difficulty in accessing a sample caused great anxiety to Fahad. Nevertheless, his experience was in accordance with the observation of Rubin and Rubin (2011) on cross-gender interviewing, especially regarding male to female interviews. They maintain that '*participants may be reluctant to allow interviewers access because of assumptions about the researcher based on his or her gender*' (p. 181). As an English speaking, Pakistani interviewer (though without British nationality), Fahad shared a common cultural background with some of his proposed research participants. However, his male gender also set him apart from both the British Pakistani and White British mothers and, arguably, rendered him an 'outsider' in both contexts. Fahad's sense of himself as an outsider accords with the suggestion of Dwyer and Buckle (2009), who posit that '*Whether the researcher is an insider; sharing the characteristic, role, or experience under study with the participants, or an outsider... including her or his membership status in relation to those participating in the research, is an essential and ever-present aspect of the investigation*' (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 55).

This initial attempt to use 'formal' channels showed that Fahad had 'outsider researcher' status, due to his male gender,

which contributed to his initial failure to recruit any respondents. As result of this failure, Fahad was obliged to reconsider the use of informal channels in order to recruit research participants. As he began to explore such informal channels, Fahad became even more aware of his ‘outsider’ status as potential interviewees turned down his invitation. Significantly, when first invited, the potential research participants showed interest. However, when they realised that they would be discussing with a man their life history, career aspirations, personal interpretation of motherhood and their emotions after switching to part-time work, their initial enthusiasm faded. Many of those invited to participate in the research through informal channels expressed ‘reservations’ about agreeing to an in-depth, face-to-face discussion on an emotionally charged, possibly ‘embarrassing’ topic in front of a male researcher. As one invitee explained:

I would participate, but I don’t know how to manage. It’s very emotional. It is hard. (An Invitee)

While ‘rapport’ and the prioritising of women’s voices had been identified as a key component for ethically appropriate research, this could not be achieved until Fahad actually secured an interview!

It thus became apparent to us that we had chosen a ‘hard to reach’ group of people for this study – though perhaps for different reasons from the usual ones.

Hard to Reach Groups

In the case of our study, the interpretation of ‘hard to reach’ research subjects was different from the usual use of this term, as the notion ‘hard to reach’ is more often associated with socially marginalised groups. Thus, although the research participants for our study proved hard for the male principal investigator to reach, they were different from the definition of ‘hard to reach’ groups as provided by Freimuth and Mettger (1990),

who define hard to reach subjects as ‘chronically uninformed, disadvantaged, have-not, illiterate, mal-functional, and information poor’ (Freimuth & Mettger, 1990: 323). By contrast, we sought research participants who were highly educated, successful and well-informed professionals who were hard to reach for different reasons, primarily, because Fahad was a man and apparently an ‘outsider’, at least in relation to the personal issues experienced by mothers. As one woman stated, during a telephone conversation prior to her interview:

It is difficult for you to understand. It is difficult to understand for any outsider. (First Interviewee of the study)

Perhaps the explicit discussion about Fahad’s ‘outsider’ status as a male interviewer may have facilitated the recruitment of this interviewee, who then discussed with him the suffragette movement and women’s struggle for equal rights in England. That conversation paved the way for the first interview.

‘Muted Masculinity’ as a Strategy of Gender Display of Male Interviewee in Cross-Gender Interviews

Having found the research subjects ‘hard to reach’, Fahad was obliged to try to meet potential participants via informal channels, meaning that personal and creative efforts were required for rapport building (Broom et al. 2009). One of Fahad’s few ‘informal contacts’ was a White British professional mother who switched from full to part-time work as a strategy for combining her career with motherhood. She was his neighbour. They usually met at that school gates, dropping off or collecting their children. She knew the topic of the research and they engaged in chat related to the significance and relevance of the topic to her own situation. The neighbour showed interest when Fahad invited her to participate in the study.

For the next six to seven weeks, however, whenever they met, she indicated that she was 'too busy' and trying to find 'some suitable time'. In the meantime, Fahad's efforts to recruit research participants from 'formal' channels were proving unsuccessful. He had no option but to wait. The neighbour explained that she was 'reluctant' to give an interview on such a sensitive topic because of the gender differences. However, she gradually perceived Fahad's routine of dropping his daughter off at school as 'different' from the stereotypes of Pakistani males.

The potential interviewee's mention of perceiving Fahad as 'different' from the stereotypes of Pakistani males opened up the possibility, for Fahad, of drawing upon Ortiz's (2005) 'display of muted masculinity' to build up rapport (Ortiz, 2005). It is interesting to note that in comparison with Ortiz (2005), Fahad's display of muted masculinity did not involve 'dramaturgical strategies'. While he *was* careful about the language and mannerisms he used in the interviews, Fahad found he really did not need to 'perform' any sort of dramaturgical version of 'muted masculinity' before or during the interviews. All he needed to do was to be himself, and to be open about his caring role with his children. Prior to beginning the research project, Fahad was used to hiding his 'parental emotions and expression' from his daughters and other family members because the cultural norms for Pakistani men would be to foreground an unemotional, work-oriented rather than family-oriented display of (non-muted) hegemonic masculinity. It is unusual for Pakistani men to be primary carers of dependent children (and to be open about this, if they are). However, Fahad did not attempt to hide that he was, at times during the project, providing full-time care for his girls. Having met his neighbour and other women at the school gates, Fahad began to be more relaxed about his identity as a Pakistani father of two school age daughters who believes strongly that 'women should have an equal chance throughout life with men for personal development, social

mobility and respect', and is 'working hard to give them such opportunities'.

One of the personal unexpected benefits for Fahad of 'muted masculinity' which he noted in his research log was being open about his carer role. This facilitated Fahad to 'express his joy' in parenting his daughters. Such openness is uncommon among Pakistani men, who are under pressure to display 'hegemonic masculinity' in which performances and negotiations of 'emotional self-control' are considered as an attribute (Connell, 2005). Developing his own interpretation of 'muted masculinity', therefore, Fahad did not attempt to hide the emotions he felt as a parent and (during interviews and pre-interview discussion) empathised with participants instead of hiding his emotions (as he believed they may have expected from especially a Pakistani male interviewer). The common role of parenthood, and the unusual fact of Fahad's being involved in his daughters' everyday activities, enhanced the rapport between the interviewer and interviewees.

One day, the first interviewee's daughter invited Fahad's daughter to a 'summer party'. Fahad was also invited to attend, along with other parents (mostly mothers). He went to the summer party with his daughter and it was good fun. The participants at the party were 'truly international' and in such a gathering it was possible to discuss different aspects of the various cultures present. This gave Fahad the opportunity to explain the 'type' of muted (non-hegemonic) masculinity in which he believes and practices, which seemed very different from the 'hegemonic masculinity' of stereotypical Pakistani men which other party-goers might expect.

The following week, the first interviewee agreed to an interview at her home. Drawing on the ethical principles which we had been established, Fahad considered that the 'safety' issue must be taken seriously and handled with care, especially in cross-gender interviewing where female participants may feel vulnerable (Lee, 1997). The first interview therefore took place in the interviewee's

kitchen whilst her husband was preparing supper. The environment was relaxed and safe. Fahad took safety measures seriously for all participants, making sure to pursue the ethical principles of the research in trying to ensure that interviewees felt as safe as possible, as suggested by Gatrell (2006). Fahad thus offered all the interviewees complete freedom to choose their preferred venue for their interview and indicated that everything would be arranged at the convenience of the interviewee and without question.

The impacts on the research process of following this particular ethical principle were that the time and effort taken to complete the interview schedule was much lengthier than had been anticipated. First, all the research participants chose their own houses or offices for interviews. It was good for the quality of the data because they felt ‘safe’ in their own chosen venue for interview. However, it took a long time to interview 13 people. It had been intended to apply the ‘snowball’ technique for recruiting potential research participants, but this did not work because of the issues related to cross-gender (male to female) interviews, and sensitivity of the research topic. Every interviewee was thus independently approached and recruited, and this involved quite extensive travel across the UK. Fahad travelled to 10 different cities for 12 interviews: Lancaster (two interviews), Morecambe (one interview), Preston (one interview), Oldham (one interview), Manchester (one interview), Trafford (one interview), Derby (one interview), Birmingham (one interview), London (two interviews, although one interviewee later withdrew from the study), and Edinburgh (one interview). The following table presents demography and brief profiles of the research participants.

The research was time consuming not only in terms of travelling, but sometimes interviews were rescheduled because of ‘unforeseeable’ reasons relating to the comfort and convenience of research participants. One of the interviewees lived in Birmingham.

She booked a time slot on one Thursday between 12.30 pm and 2.00 p.m. Travelling from North West England, Fahad reached Birmingham about 11.30 a.m. by bus. He took another bus to reach the nearest bus stop to her home, and then took a taxi. When he reached her home, her husband came out of the house, telling Fahad that she would not be available for interview because relatives had arrived at the home without prior notice. The husband insisted that, as a Pakistani male, Fahad should understand that parents and relatives do not need to inform the family before visiting. He also indicated that Fahad ‘must’ understand the responsibilities of his wife (preparing food etc.) in such a situation. In terms of the cultural context, Fahad did understand, but had nevertheless travelled a long way. However, he was also bound by the ethical principle of prioritising the comfort and convenience of interviewees. He thus felt he had little option other than to ‘smile’ and leave. While this might be the approach adopted by many researchers, this situation was perhaps especially challenging for Fahad, given the difficulties he had faced in recruiting his research sample.

Fortunately, perhaps because of the manner in which Fahad had prioritised her comfort and convenience, the Birmingham interviewee phoned later, explaining how sorry she was. Due to Fahad’s understanding and courtesy regarding the cancelled interview she agreed on a second date and time for the interview. This time, the venue was the house of her parents, where her mother took care of the children. The interviewee appeared to speak freely and openly. She shared her invaluable experience of the process of switching to part-time work from full-time work, combining her career with motherhood as a British Pakistani professional mother in a male dominated profession.

Furthermore, although Fahad soon discovered the difficulties in recruiting mothers due to his male gender, he had assumed that the recruitment of British Pakistani women might be more challenging than that of the

Table 24.1 UK study on motherhood, part-time work and professional careers: Demography and profiles of research participants

Name	Liz	Tanya	Fatima	Sana	Kate	Ali	Valli	Safia	Iffat	Rafah	Yasmin
Occp*	Food	Consult	Engineer	Account	R&T*	Manager	Manager	R&T*	Manager	Therapy	Manager
Career*	10 to 20	20 to 30	1 to 10	1 to 10	10 to 20	20 to 30	1 to 10	1 to 10	10 to 20	10 to 20	10 to 20
Children	2	2	2	3	2	1	2	2	3	4	3
P/T R*	CB*	CA*	CB*	CB/PD*	CB/PD*	CA*	CB*	CB*	CB*	CB*	CB/PD*
WS*	P/T*	F/T*	P/T*	P/T*	F/T*	P/T*	P/T*	P/T*	P/T*	P/T*	P/T*
Sector*	Bank/Chef	L&D*	Software	Finance	Education	L&D*	HR	Education	Health	L&D*	Health
Age	40s	40s	30s	30s	30s	40s	30s	30s	30s	40s	40s
Marital Status	Divorced	Married	Married	Married	Married	Never Married	Partner	Married	Married	Married	Married
Ethnicity	White	White	British	British	White	White	White	British	British	British	British
	British	British	Pakistani	Pakistani	British	British	British	Pakistani	Pakistani	Pakistani	Pakistani

Occp* = Occupation

Career* = Number of years of service in the profession

P/T R* = Reason for part-time

WS* = Work status

Sector* = Employment sector

R&T = Research and teaching

CB* = Child birth and care

CA* = Child adoption and care

PD* = Professional development

P/T* = Part-time

F/T* = Full-time but worked part-time at one stage of professional care

L&D* = Learning and development

White British mothers, in accordance with Brah (1993) and Wigfield and Turner (2012), because they belong to a faith-based community (see also Brackertz et al., 2005: 37). In practice, while it was hard to recruit any mothers at all, there were perhaps fewer problems in engaging the White British women than the British Pakistani respondents. However, the reasons given by British Pakistani women for uncertainties about taking part in the research were not those that had been anticipated. In the event the main, and unexpected, barrier among such women proved to be their concern with gaining their husband's approval in order to feel comfortable about being interviewed. This concern could not be questioned, due to the ethical principle of putting the comfort and cultural traditions of respondents before all else. This came of something as a surprise given that of 5 out of 6 British Pakistani women research participants were more educated, and had been earning significantly more than their husbands when they were working full time. Yet all of the women wanted to obtain their husband's approval and act according to their cultural tradition. One of these interviewees lives in London and withdrew from the study after the stage of data analysis because her husband withdrew his approval of her participation in the study. Despite the great disappointment that came with losing important data from this member of a hard to reach group, no attempt was made to question this decision, due to the ethical principles of the project.

Reciprocity

Interestingly, while Fahad did feel he had achieved rapport with those he interviewed, he did not experience a sense of 'reciprocity' within interviewees – once they had established that he was empathetic, and closely involved in the day-to-day care of his own daughters, the mothers he was interviewing did not ask any further questions or show interest in how Fahad managed his

commitments to work and family. Rather, in a manner similar to cross-gender interviews conducted by Ortiz (2005), Broom et al. (2009) and Gatrell (2006), Fahad noted that the interviewees 'preferred to preserve the interview as space to talk about their own issues' (Gatrell, 2006: 245), instead of a reciprocal information sharing event. Once the interview began, it seemed that interviewees wanted to be listened to with interest and without interruption, regardless of the gender of the interviewer.

DISCUSSION

This chapter has considered the complexity of applying, in practice, ethical principles in research where there are cross-gender qualitative research interviews (male interviewer and female interviewees). While research ethics are frequently discussed, this is commonly in relation to female to female, or male to female interviewing. Here, by contrast, we have reflected on how gender mattered across a range of cultural contexts and what ethical approaches we needed to consider in male to female interviews. We have outlined how initial research strategies had to be adapted as the research progressed, and having reflected on these adaptations, we now reflect on what we have learned.

MUTED MASCULINITY AND MANAGEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

First, having intended to adopt 'muted masculinities' according to the framework developed by Ortiz (2005), Fahad found a way to adopt the principles of muted masculinities by simply being himself. This was because the interview preparation process and reflection on the first interview had revealed that although he was an 'outsider' in terms of

gender, ethnicity and nationality, his status as child carer and career-oriented professional connected him with the interviewees in a manner which had not been anticipated. Fahad found, in particular, that the expression of parental emotions, being known as an active father through the routine of dropping his children off and picking them up from school, were regarded by other mothers as 'un-hegemonic masculinity'. Arguably, Fahad's relationship with his daughters (once participants came to understand this) overrode the gender differences which constrained recruitment. From a personal perspective, the use of the learning log and subsequent discussions aided the development of the muted masculinities and assisted in thinking through how to manage researcher anxieties and research problems as they arose. Fahad felt he benefited personally from such reflections. Having been a 'typical hide-emotions-from-daughters type of Pakistani father before starting this research', he has changed his 'type of fatherhood'. In his notes, Fahad observed how:

I used to 'hide' that I cook for my kids, but now I do not feel 'shame' anymore to tell people about cooking and enjoying the school sports day of my children. It is possible that cooking, attending sports days and 'green assemblies' etc. are entirely opposite to a typical Pakistani father, but I simply do not hide this change. I share the feelings of parenthood truly and honestly with my interviewees, usually after the interview, but also through pauses, facial expression and an emotional display of parenthood that connected the interviewees and me.

Rapport and Safety

Second, while we had interpreted 'rapport' as including a sense or reciprocity, this was not the case. Fahad experienced interviews as predominantly 'interviewees' events' providing a space where the women could explore without interruption their issues related to career, motherhood and part-time work. Fahad felt connected with interviewees

because as an 'emotion expressing father' they found him to be 'a bit different to typical males'. Despite the difficulties of recruiting research participants, the in-depth, open and personal information offered by the interviewees on the sensitive issues around their interpretation and practice of motherhood; the significance of career in their life and the impact of part-time work on career and motherhood proved very motivating for Fahad. The first interviewee expressed a sense of relief in sharing her 'struggle and success' with someone in an open and non-judgemental environment (Gatrell, 2006).

How Does Gender Matter in Qualitative Interviews?

Although Fahad's male gender did not seem to affect the conducting of interviews negatively (though it did constrain recruitment), it raised an important point to be considered in all research endeavours with participants who identify with a group based on a shared experience such as gender. This issue confronts both researchers who are members of the group they are studying and those who are not, for there are costs and benefits to each status.

Based on the above reflections, Fahad's experience of cross-gender research interviews has shown that rapport building and safety of interviewees (and interviewers) are central tenets of male to female interview events. Perhaps being open about emotions is also helpful for male interviewers seeking to perform 'gender' appropriately during in-depth interviews. Arguably, based on the rich cross-gender interviews conducted as part of this study, men can interview women (even women from hard to reach communities) and gain rich data.

We would argue that cross-gender interviewing is not problematic by default. We agree with Ortiz (2005), Gatrell (2006) and Brook et al. (2009) that interviewees need to be listened to with interest (Brook, 2011),

empathy (Ortiz, 2005), non-judgementally and without interruption, whoever is conducting the interview (Gatrell, 2006). Nevertheless, the field of qualitative research could benefit greatly if those male researchers involved in cross-gender interviews share their learning. Such an approach would lead to the development of fresh perspectives in the field of cross-gender studies and will enable, in the future, better and informed research design regarding ethical approaches to sensitive issues in cross-gender research.

REFERENCES

- Adam, L., McAndrew, F., & Winterbotham, M. (2005). Pregnancy discrimination at work: A survey of women. *Equal Opportunities Commission, Working Paper No. 24*. Manchester: Equal Opportunity Commission.
- Arifeen, S. R., & Gatrell, C. (2013). A blind spot in organization studies: Gender with ethnicity, nationality and religion. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 28(3), 151–170.
- Atkinson, M. (1972). A precise phenomenology for the general scholar. *Journal of General Education*, 23(4), 261–297.
- Blair-Loy, M. (2003). *Competing devotions: Career and family among women executives*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Brackertz, N., Zwart, I., Meredyth, D., & Ralston, L. (2005). *Community consultation and the 'hard to reach'*. Victorian Local Governance Association/Swinburne Institute for Social Research. p. 37.
- Brah, A. (1993). 'Race' and 'culture' in the gendering of labour markets: South Asian young Muslim women and the labour market. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 19(3), 441–458.
- Broom, A., Hand, K., & Tovey, P. (2009). The role of gender, environment and individual biography in shaping qualitative interview data. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12(1), 51–65.
- Cassell, C. (2005). Creating the interviewer: Identity work in the management research process. *Qualitative Research*, 5(2), 167–179.
- Connell, R. G. (2005). *Masculinities*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Cooper, C. L. & Gatrell, C. J. (2008). Work-life balance: working for whom? *European Journal of International Management*, 2(1), 71–86.
- Crompton, R. (1997). *Women and work in modern Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2009). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Dwyer, S. C., & Buckle, J. L. (2009). The space between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8(1), 54–63.
- Edwards, R., & Ribbens, J. (1998). Living on the edges: Public knowledge, private lives, personal experience. In J. Ribbens & R. Edwards (Eds.), *Feminist dilemmas in qualitative research: Public knowledge and private lives* (pp. 1–23). London: Sage.
- Epstein, C. F., Seron, C., Oglesky, B., & Sauté, R. (1999). *The part-time paradox: Time norms, professional life, family and gender*. New York: Routledge.
- Evetts, J. (2000). Analysing change on women's career: Culture, structure and dimensions. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 7(1), 57–67.
- Freimuth, V. S., & Mettger, W. (1990). Is there a hard-to-reach audience? *Public Health Reports*, 105(3), 232–238.
- Gatrell, C. J. (2005). *Hard labour: The sociology of parenthood*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Gatrell, C. J. (2006). Interviewing fathers: Feminist dilemmas in fieldwork. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 15(3), 237–251.
- Gatrell, C. J. (2007). A fractional commitment? Part-time employment and the maternal body. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 18(3), 462–475.
- Gatrell, C. J., & Cooper, C. L. (2008). Work-life balance: Working for whom? *European Journal of International Management*, 2(1), 71–86.
- Graham, H. (1983). Do her answers fit his questions? Women and the survey method.

- In E. Gamarnikow, E. D. Morgan, D. J. Purvis, & D. Taylorson (Eds.), *The public and the private* (pp. 132–146). London: Heinemann.
- Hakim, C. (2000). *Work-lifestyle choices in the 21st Century: Preference theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Haynes, K. (2008). Transforming identities: Accounting professionals and the transition to motherhood. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 19(5), 620–642.
- Hays, S. (1996) *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Hochschild, A. R. (2001). *The time bind: When work becomes home and home becomes work*. New York: Henry Holt.
- Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. F. (1995). *The active interview*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lee, D. (1997). Interviewing men: Vulnerabilities and dilemmas. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 20(4), 553–564.
- Lohan, M. (2000). Extending feminist methodologies: Researching masculinities and technologies. In A. Byrne & R. Lentin (Eds.), *(Re)searching women* (pp. 167–187). Dublin: IPA.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McKee, L., and Margaret O. (1983). Interviewing men: Taking gender seriously. In Eva G. (ed.), *The public and the private* (pp. 147–161). Portsmouth: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Merton, R., Fiske, M., & Kendall, P. (1990). *The focused interviews: A manual of problems and procedures*. 2nd edition. New York: Free Press.
- Oakley, A. (1981). Interviewing women: A contradiction in terms. In H. Roberts, *Doing feminist research*. London, Routledge. (2013 edn, pp. 30–61).
- Oakley, A. (1999). People's way of knowing: Gender and methodology. In S. Hood, B. Mayall & S. Oliver (Eds.), *Critical issues in social research* (pp. 154–170). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- ONS (2013) *Women in the labour market*. www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_328352.pdf (Accessed on: 18/11/2015).
- Ortiz, S. M. (2005). The ethnographic process of gender management: Doing the 'right' masculinity with wives of professional athletes. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(2), 265–290.
- Peyton, N., & Gatrell, C. (2013). *Managing clergy lives: Obedience, sacrifice, intimacy*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Radcliffe, L. S., & Cassell, C. (2013). Resolving couples' work–family conflicts: The complexity of decision making and the introduction of a new framework. *Human Relations*, 67(7), 793–819.
- Reinharz, S. and Davidman, L., (1992). *Feminist methods in social research*. Oxford University Press.
- Ribbens, J. (1994). *Mothers and their children: A feminist sociology of childrearing*. London: Sage.
- Rose, P. (1985). *Writing on women: Essays in a renaissance*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2011). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Seidman, I. (2013). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Stewart, D., & Mickunas, A. (1990). *Exploring phenomenology: A guide to the field and its literature*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.
- Stone, F. (1972). *Phenomenological approaches to research in education* (Multicultural Research Guide Series, 2). Storrs, CT: University of Connecticut, World Education Project, 1978.
- Wigfield, A., & Turner, R. (2012). South Asian women and the labour market in the UK: Attitudes, barriers, solutions. *Jurnalul Practicilor Comunitare Pozitive*, 4, 642–666.
- Williams, C. L., & Heikes, E. J. (1993). The importance of researcher's gender in the in-depth interview: Evidence from two case studies of male nurses. *Gender and Society*, 7(2), 280–291.

Writing through the Body: Political, Personal, Practical

Amanda Sinclair and Donna Ladkin

INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to write ‘through the body’? How does the materiality of your body, your perceptions and responses, affect who you are as a writer, what is important for you to write about and how you go about writing? And how can you bring more of your embodied knowing – your hunches and gut feel, your tastes and senses – to your research, writing it in ways that are vivid and enlivening for you and your readers? In this chapter we explore these questions and argue that attending to the memories, emotions and physically anchored learning that bodies carry enables researchers to learn ‘that which was unknowable and unimaginable’ using more conventional writing formats (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005: 963). We believe, and venture here, that writing through the body is a political act for a researcher, one that is particularly suitable for qualitative researchers who often seek to give voice to the overlooked but crucial

subjectively experienced meanings of phenomena.

We also aim to be practical – not to lose our bodies and your bodily responses under a weight of theorizing. We faced a conundrum in writing this chapter. While a handbook contribution is expected to provide an extensive theoretical and research review, our focus and our own experience demanded that we write this chapter differently. We have sought not just to write *about* ‘writing through the body’ but to place our bodies and our feel for your likely bodily responses front and centre *in the way* that we have written. We’d like to invite you – we can’t control your reaction so it’s really just an invitation – to read this chapter with your body as well as your mind.

The following anecdote from Donna’s experience provides an example of the kind of bodily intelligence we’ll be exploring in the chapter:

One of my PhD students, Chris, was having enormous difficulties writing up his thesis. Although he

had done the fieldwork and delved into the literature to understand where his study was positioned theoretically, whenever he sat down to write he just couldn't get started. 'I have to have the whole argument in my head before I start writing it,' he explained, 'and I just don't know the whole argument yet. I have to keep thinking about it.' Although I encouraged him to just 'start writing', months went by and all he produced were scratchings and incoherent paragraphs. It was only when the deadline for his registration began to loom that something shifted for him. 'With the pressure of the deadline, I suddenly realised I just HAD to start writing. And the strangest thing began to happen.... the more I wrote the more I began to understand what I wanted to write. It happened that way round – by writing I understood what I wanted to write, rather than the way I thought it worked – knowing what to write and then scribing it down'.

Chris had assumed, as many of us do, that he had to 'know' what he knew before writing. But this way of understanding writing, as something that follows rather than precedes or accompanies knowing, ignores how the physical act of writing itself provokes sense-making. It is often only through the physical motion of engaging hands and fingers with the mental 'ideas' that what we know is able to take form in written words. Empowering ourselves to write well includes listening to our bodies and what they know about what we are trying to say.

So, what bodies are these – poised at computers on opposite sides of the world, writing this chapter? We are two women academics who share an interest in leadership, as well as yoga and physicality. Amanda is Australian with ancestors from Northern Europe. Shortish and with a history of feeling a bit overlooked, her sense is that she needed to be bigger or more provocative to be heard. This possibly explains some of her subsequent behaviour and her career, which has often involved challenging conventional notions of leadership. Donna is American by birth and British by naturalization and of African American, Native American, French and German heritage. Making her home in a different country, she is particularly sensitive to

the way in which culture impacts on what is deemed 'important'. Understanding knowledge as situated, contingent and based on who is in power has been a lived reality of her life. Perhaps as a result of her own situated-ness, she has a reputation for requiring her students to reflect on 'how' they know, as well as 'what' they know.

One of the many things that drew the two of us together was a belief in the potentially redemptive qualities of the physical and the sensuous. We believe people, including researchers, are at their most empowered and inventive when feeling connected to the delights, pleasures, surprises and frustrations of being a physical as well as mental body. Let's test that idea out by inviting you to 'check in' with your own body, wherever, and however it is right now:

Take a moment to notice how you feel at this moment. Are you feeling sluggish, or do you feel awake and curious? Where do you most 'feel' your body? For instance, are you most aware of tension in your jaw – or instead are you aware of a general feeling of warmth or coldness in your limbs? Take a moment to notice your belly. What are the sensations there? How are your chest, ribs and heart areas feeling? Note any awareness you might have of tightness or heaviness. Are you clenching your jaw or hunching your shoulders? Just notice those impressions without deciding they are good or bad, right or wrong. Tapping into the wisdom of the body requires listening to it in all its states, rather than judging the way it is.

Enjoy a slow, luxurious breath in. Notice your chest rising, or even your abdomen expanding if your breath travels down into the lower regions of your chest cavity. Breathe out, noticing if you've made any judgements about yourself, your breath or our instructions. Hunch up your shoulders and let them fall, adding a sigh as you breathe out. Notice your posture – is there anything you can do to put your body at greater ease? How do you feel as a result of bringing your attention to your body in these ways?

Involving your body in simple practices like those described above opens the door to an embodied way of reading and writing. Increasing amounts of research from diverse

sources – from philosophers and phenomenologists, feminist and critical theorists, scholars of the creative and performing arts as well as neuroscientific researchers – suggest that bodies play crucial but neglected roles in apprehending the world and in linguistically and cognitively mediated processes of sense-making (Cunliffe & Coupland, 2011; Meriläinen et al., 2015). For example, phenomenologists such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945, 1968) and cognitive scientists such as Francisco Varela (1993) insist that ‘the body’s way of knowing the world is primary, prior to cognition’s role in selecting and interpreting’ (Ladkin, 2013: 325). As psychoanalytically informed theorists also show, bodies and bodily responses offer ways of tuning into what is noticed less consciously, those dimensions of experience that our self-appointed rational or polite minds may censor at cost to our deeper understanding (see for example Vachhani, 2012). Embodied ways of sensing and understanding are indispensable in enabling us to focus attention; to find ‘flow’ or a state of absorption and creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990); and to uncover deeper understanding and wisdom.

In line with these understandings, we encourage you to stay ‘in your body’ as you read this chapter. Notice how your breath changes when reading certain sections. Be aware of paragraphs which result in feelings of tiredness or disinterest, and others that quicken your pulse. What can your own bodily reactions teach you about the rhythm and shape of writing that enlivens? How might you put what you experience into your own practice as a qualitative researcher?

As well as exploring such practical dimensions, the chapter begins by delving into the political agenda behind omitting the body and its wisdom from so much academic writing. We believe that consciously engaging the body in the process of conducting research and writing is a political act particularly appropriate in undertaking qualitatively based research. Interrogating why so much

academic writing is disembodied and the purposes this serves is a good platform from which to encourage you to consider disrupting those conventions. In the second section of the chapter we offer our own narratives and experiments with consciously ‘writing through the body’. Rather than suggesting our experiences provide recipes for approaching this territory, we wish to tempt or provoke you into exploring your own opportunities and challenges in inviting your body in. The third part of the chapter is devoted to describing some practical activities both ‘on’ and ‘off’ the page, practices you might already engage in for other purposes but which we hope will help you change the way you think about and approach your research and writing practice.

THE POLITICAL: DISRUPTING THE APPARENT ERASURE OF BODIES IN ACADEMIC WRITING

Why have bodies been omitted from academic writing and what are the consequences of that omission? To begin to answer these questions, let’s consider the features of privileged management and organizational writing; the kind you read in the *Academy of Management Journal* and other high-status, high rejection rate journals where most researchers aspire to publish. A primary criterion for the validity of such text is that authors and their bodies, with all their prejudices and predilections, are expunged from the text. Conventions concerning the ‘proper structure’ for journal articles, rules concerning referencing and substantiating claims, serve to constrain the writing into a predictable form. Even journals with a reputation or mandate to challenge and critique conventional management knowledge are often surprisingly un-experimental when it comes to the writing. Though there are, of course, exceptions, bodies are largely uncommon

subjects of managerial research, and researchers' bodies and sensory responses seldom appear in their written accounts.

These omissions are not accidental. The 'standardization' of academic writing is an act of power. Keeping writing cerebral and governed by restrictive norms of form and vocabulary are mechanisms through which power and authority stay in the hands of editorial and other gatekeepers. They are the processes by which a discursive political economy is erected, policing what is written into discourse and how. Although it can be argued that such norms were established to maintain clarity and transparency for other researchers to comprehend, and perhaps replicate, much contemporary academic writing no longer meets these criteria. Rather, these taken for granted academic conventions of writing often involve loss: of vividness, of immediacy, of embodied responses among writers and readers.

You might find yourself thinking that the loss of such vividness is a small price to pay in order to achieve the hallmark of 'good' academic research: objectivity. Joining many qualitative researchers, we want to disrupt the taken for granted view that academic knowing is objective and expressed as a 'voice from nowhere'. We write this chapter from the perspective that all knowledge is situated and mediated through our physical forms. For qualitative or interpretive researchers especially, 'there is no place to stand outside of the social world that allows a view of truth unmediated by human language and embeddedness in circumstance' (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012: 98). Writing – its form, content and absences as well as presences – is shaped by cultural and disciplinary forces which themselves limit what can be known. Knowledge systems exert discipline over their members about how new claims to authority are made. As academics, our role is not just to be bound by, and dutifully reproduce, such systems. It is to critique and challenge them, to experiment with radically different discourses and ways of writing (Richardson, 1997). Further though, the act of writing itself

can be understood as a method of inquiry. The writing *is* the mode of inquiry, and how we engage with the body as we write determines what we find as researchers (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2009). For example, our bodily sense of what is important may encourage us to not leave out what we don't understand: thus 'not flinching from where the writing takes one emotionally or spiritually' (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005: 965).

Why might writing through the body be especially suited to qualitative research? As this volume shows, qualitative research is interested in capturing, reflecting and inspecting the subjectively and sensuously experienced world of organizations. It often problematizes the supposed gaps between researcher and researched in that qualitative researchers' interpretations of the research field are formed by their interests, past experiences and intuitions in more marked ways than quantitatively based researchers, who test research hypotheses from a distance. 'Themes' which arise from data sets are often grounded in bodily based recognitions of patterns or 'felt' disruptions in what one is analysing. Suggesting that data can be 'objectively' ordered is a remnant from the positivistic paradigm and an assumption ill-suited to most qualitative research.

Feminist theorists have also exposed the gender politics that have often underpinned academic writing. Some have argued that what presents itself as objective writing is actually what has been privileged as masculine writing. In this view, writing has always had a body – a manly one. For example, Jane Hindman observes that 'academic writing is masculinist: represented and taught as if it were coherent, methodologically sound, articulate, consistent, democratic (or at least impartial and consensual) and most importantly, rational' (2002: 98). Prescriptions for good writing have reflected notions of embodied masculinity: forceful, spare, muscular. In contrast, bad writing is often viewed as excessive, inappropriately intimate or confessional.

As counterpoints to masculine, disembodied accounts, feminist writers also offer extensive and rich experimentations in 'writing through the body' (Metcalf, 2003). Concerned with how male-centric modes of theorising 'disappear' women's experiences, their embodied identities and sexualities, women writers and researchers have advocated palpably different relationships between body and consciousness, text and knowledge. For example, in Beverly Metcalfe's exploration of Sylvia Plath's poetry and Luce Irigaray's writing, 'the body of the writer plays an important role in the textual product' (2003: 6). Putting the body into the writing is a form of productive resistance, creating new textual spaces to explore typically masked aspects of feminine consciousness, eros and sensuality.

So Why Don't Researchers Experiment with Writing Differently?

The obvious response is that for the most part, universities, employers, journal editorial boards, supervisors, only value one legitimated form of writing. People who are junior in academia have to emulate the rules. They don't have power to disrupt established norms, or so the argument often goes. But Foucault's work shows us that we all have power, indeed, disturbing norms of writing or writing in innovative ways may be one of the ways we can resist oppression and create greater freedoms for others through our writing (see also Grey & Sinclair, 2006).

Our hunch is that a deeper reason why researchers often collude with disembodied, normative writing is to do with securing identity. Our selves are constructed through writing, and, especially for researchers, learning to write is a means of performing a validated self (Ivanič, 1998). According to this view, one of the main tasks for a research student is learning the language sufficiently well to sound authoritative. Through writing within

the dominant discourse, fears about one's value are allayed or at least deferred. By obeying writing rules, a future is made knowable and one's position in it more secure.

What is the alternative to constructing one's identity by staying within these traditional forms? Educator Jane Gallop suggests that in order to make our writing mat(t)erial 'we must gesture to our bodies, and our lives' (1988: 4). This can be accomplished, she suggests, by marking our bodies' presence, calling to the surface associations my thinking process passes through, such as those connected with my gender, race, class or sexual orientation as I write. This is a process of 'self authorizing', bringing the truth of embodied knowing to what is written. Amanda remembers the excitement when she first encountered Gallop's writing, a paper entitled 'The Teacher's Breasts' (1995). As she relates in the next section of this chapter, it was one of a few pieces of writing that recognized the body not as a bystander, but as author, disrupter and transformer of academic knowledge.

What's going on in your body now? Sit back now and move your gaze to something external like the view out the window. Allow your shoulders to drop and the body to be as comfortable and relaxed as it can be at the moment. As you read the sections above about writing, power and identity, how has your body reacted to different sections? Have you felt a slight quickening of the breath and alertness of posture as some ideas and sentences 'hit home' or resonate with your own experience? Alternatively, which paragraphs have been met with a numbing of bodily response – perhaps as others work is referenced and our writing has obeyed conventional academic norms? Tune into what your body might be telling you about your appetite for the next section.

THE PERSONAL: OUR EXPERIENCES OF BRINGING OUR BODIES TO RESEARCH AND WRITING

Bodies and embodied responses are, we have suggested above, important subjects of study

in organizational research, but further, can act as agents of creativity and innovation in understanding and writing our findings. In fascinating research exploring investment bankers' relationships with their bodies, Alexandra Michel shows that while bankers' minds are terrifyingly willing subjects of organizational socialization and norms, 'the body cannot be socialized completely' (2011: 325). Michel's findings confirm that bodily responses can override the otherwise slavish tendencies of our minds to conform. Further, bankers who listened and paid attention to bodily responses, including breakdown, performed better over the long term. These individuals were assessed as being more creative and flexible in their roles, less prone to 'meltdowns' and generally rated as being more successful. Michel recommends future research explore 'sensitizing individuals to the body's creativity' (2011: 357).

That bodies and physicality could open up new understandings of leadership was a possibility that Donna and her co-editor, Steve Taylor, were keen to explore in their edited collection *The Physicality of Leadership: Gesture, Entanglement, Taboo, Possibilities* (Ladkin & Taylor, 2014). Chapters in the book reveal that rather than being passive carriers of understanding and knowledge, bodies are inextricably entwined with the enactment of leadership. For instance, Mary Phillips's (2014) account of Star Trek Captain Jean-Luc Picard's suppressed sexuality in contrast to the Borg Queen's blatant eroticism highlights the 'taboo' territory of sexual dynamics in the workplace, which Bathurst and Messervy's subsequent chapter explores in the real-life example of Bill Clinton's US presidency (Bathurst & Messervy, 2014).

Donna and Steve also sought to encourage ways of writing *about* physicality that enabled it to be 'experienced as more than a "concept" but as a kinaesthetic apprehension' (Ladkin & Taylor, 2014: 5). In her own chapter 'In through the nose, out through the mouth', Donna tells the story of her coaching work with an accounting executive,

which partially involved helping him breathe differently. The chapter includes some of Donna's notes after coaching, which describe her observations about and responses to his hunched posture, averted gaze and hesitant voice. As she writes about him and her own responses, as well as intermittently directly addressing the reader, her writing itself helps to create somatic connections: we slow down and breathe more deeply, we feel the pressures of workplaces and then the tenderness and care that is required for us all to survive them. Similarly, and in another very moving chapter, 'Open your heart', Steve writes about his experience inviting students to open their heart in exercising leadership. His writing – in both its content and the way he writes with spare prose – helps us feel the students' fear and courage that are inevitably part of opening our hearts. The writing itself resists playing the 'status games' that so often get in the way.

Amanda's writing about bodies in leadership commenced with her observation of the paradox of the visibility of leader bodies being largely invisible in research writing (Sinclair, 2005a; see also Ladkin, 2013). Bodies seemed to matter in leadership but were not written about in research. The capacity to physically dominate – to be tall, athletic or to have an imposing voice – gave certain male leaders an edge. Many women and minority leaders struggled to deliver this 'look' of leadership. She initially wanted to simply write *about* this – the presence and power of bodies in leadership but their absence from leadership scholarship. As she did so, however, her intent and approach *in* the writing changed – from writing conventionally about the body and its absence to becoming more experimental. Reflecting on her writing journey, Amanda can discern phases through which her writing migrated from a more cognitive approach of making intellectual sense of what she was researching, to wanting her own bodily sensations and those of potential readers to guide her, as she describes below.

Phase 1: My own body as a problem: In this initial stage, my body in relation to writing felt like an obstacle to be overcome. My body couldn't be tied to the desk long enough to write. I never had enough time away from childcare and domestic responsibilities to satisfy the academic ideal of the researcher. I fitted in bits of writing around other roles and identities, being opportunistic in what I wrote and finding publication opportunities where I could.

Phase 2: Noticing and drawing attention to bodies in my writing about leadership: While researching the absence of women in leadership, I noticed and began writing about how men's bodies were often pivotal to the herculean construction of male leadership. Yet that herculean construction was invisible. Meanwhile, women and other leaders who did not conform to the able-bodied, white heterosexual stereotype of tall manliness were subject to a barrage of advice. I began documenting the ways women leaders hide, de-sexualise, maternalise, masculinise or make benign their bodies. I became more alert to the 'clothing rules' women learned: only one piece of 'statement' jewellery, minimal cleavage, navy suits not red, heel heights neither too tall (seductress) nor flat (lesbian). Women were told they should worry about how they look but shouldn't look like they are worrying about how they look; to do so would appear self-obsessed or narcissistic.

Phase 3: Advocating for attention to bodies in research: Acknowledging the different 'body rules' for male and female leaders, I was also keen to research the positive contributions of bodies, and care for the bodies of others, in leadership. For example, in 'Body possibilities in leadership' (Sinclair, 2005a), I wanted to show bodies not just as problems but potentially a key enabler of good leadership. Following the work of feminist scholars, I also wrote about bodies in management teaching, suggesting that learning might be enhanced with an embodied pedagogy (Sinclair, 2005b; see also Bell & Sinclair 2014).

Phase 4: Experimenting with ways of writing about bodies that were not theoretical, but that resonated with people's experiences of being bodies: Accessing academic scholarship on bodies, I found much of it – well – disembodied! I embarked on a range of experiments trying to capture more of the body in the writing. In the first of these, 'Placing self' (Sinclair, 2010), each page of the article contained an upper section or 'top self' and a lower section or 'bottom self', following a device used by

novelist J.M. Coetzee (2007). While the 'top' text was written in the voice and language of academic discourse, the 'bottom' text gave voice to the more child-like, censored and needy part of me. My argument was that leaders benefit from reflexive identity work, mapping feelings, doubts and vulnerabilities that are expressed bodily rather than cognitively. I wanted to try and demonstrate it in the writing as well as write about it. Writing that piece felt exposing. Although the editor, David Collinson, was encouraging, I can't escape the feeling that other readers were embarrassed, at least made awkwardly silent, by it.

Phase 5: Further experimentation: writing the stream of embodied perceptions and sensations that are an unspoken part of leadership: From my own experience and from working with leaders, I knew there was an embodied subtext of experience and self-talk that accompanies leaders wherever they are: 'I am so tired I don't know how I am going to stay awake for this evening meeting', 'that dodgy knee is agony when I sit for long periods in those chairs', 'how does person X continue to project so perky and confident an image when his marriage is going down the toilet?' In 'A material dean' (Sinclair, 2013), I wanted to capture the viscosity and immediacy of this stream of embodied reactions – the humour, petulance, gut reactions interwoven with enacting leadership, but which are rarely acknowledged. I hoped the reader would tune into their own embodied reactions; to have their stomach turn as they read about the formal dinner where the fish was slightly off and to re-experience similar occasions where the food matches the indigestible tone of the event. My own Dean wanted to read this article and requested a copy (perhaps to check it wasn't slanderous). To his credit, he admitted he could relate to the feeling of his heart sinking as he walked into a meeting and hearing a particular strident voice holding forth.

Phase 6: Putting the censored body and its sensations into an account of leadership to exemplify how bodies are part of constructing a convincing leadership persona: In 'On knees, breasts and being fully human in leadership' (Sinclair, 2014), I wanted to go even further in bringing the body's contribution to enacting leadership into focus. Using the occasion of an interview for the CEO position of a large construction company, I aimed to capture in the writing moment-by-moment, physically anchored feelings for the main characters (2 CEO candidates and the company founder). For each, their bodies were the carriers for history and memories, vulnerabilities and fears. I was also,

as with 'A material dean', trying to engage the reader, to make it hard for them not to think about their own painful knee or embarrassment about aspects of their body. I wanted to invite from the reader their bodily experiences of previous interviews where the job requires a performance of leadership which is a long way – for most of us – from doubt-ridden, embodied feelings of inadequacy. After reading the piece a colleague volunteered that it had prompted him immediately to remember his discomfort walking after damaging one of his feet, and the implications of this on his confidence and capacity to travel and do his job. It is that kind of recognition of how the body is foundational to the experience of 'doing leadership' which I'd hoped the chapter would foster.

Phase 7: Encouraging mindfulness and the value of 'being present in the moment' in the practice of research, writing and leadership: Over the past ten years or so, I have begun researching and writing about mindfulness and especially its application in leadership. My interest in mindfulness has grown out of my yoga and meditation practice. Though it began – and is often positioned as – a practice on the edge of my work to help gain perspective and relieve stress, I realized that mindfulness might be more fruitfully practised at the heart of how we are in our day-to-day being of work and leadership. Initially, my interest in mindfulness, I think, struck many as being opposed to my interest in bodies. It is commonly thought that the body becomes irrelevant when one is being 'mindful'. However, it is the body, its sensations and the breath that are the most common and reliable ways to access mindfulness or awareness of the present moment. Conveying how this works through writing is difficult. I found that the usual language and discourses of academic writing just didn't work. I found myself sabotaged by my internal critic labelling me 'confessional' or criticizing me in the voice of colleagues: 'too personal' and 'where's the evidence?' The writing had to be different. I had to allow other forms of authority to be present. I had to allow the writing to come from a different place in me: sensations, gut and heart. I know by my body's response when a patch of writing is flaccid or predictable. There is a tingle of excitement when it's not. What feels right in the writing is what feels fresh, beguiling (I can never use 'beguiling' without remembering my mother – it was a favourite of hers). What feels right in the writing is what is worth pausing for, savouring. What words might land in a place where the reader can feel it, act on it, be lifted, sustained or moved by it? These are embodied responses that I am seeking to value in writing.

Embodied responses are always worth noticing – if not following – in writing. The body provides clues about whether a piece of writing feels true or 'felt' (Ladkin, 2013). Our bodies also encourage us to take the reader's perspective and put a value not just on imparting ideas but doing so in ways that surprise or energize. Life is too short to condemn others to boring writing. It is too short for our own hard-won research to remain un-read. So, how might we write with, from and through the body?

THE PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL: WAYS OF WRITING WITH THE BODY

Why don't you have a bit of a stretch now? If you are sitting and it's possible to, get up and raise your arms as high or as wide as they will go. As yoga practitioners, both of us recommend the benefits of stretching for life in general, not just for writing. As an embodied practice for writing, stretching and consciously breathing allows the blood to more freely circulate and facilitates the moving of oxygen around the system. Such breathing and stretching creates a virtuous circle, in which you can be more alive and also be more sensitive to what is enlivening you. Best of all, stretching can be done wherever you are. When you've returned your attention to this page, notice how your body is now feeling.

In this final section of the chapter we offer some practical suggestions concerning *how* you can write through the body. Though not a definitive list, they are practices and activities which have changed and (we hope) helped our writing.

Practices on the Page

In the contemporary context, it would be more accurate to title this section 'Practices on the screen' rather than 'Practices on the page', as so much academic writing now takes place directly on to computer screens through keyboards rather than on to material paper. (Indeed, this chapter is taking shape on a computer screen in Australia and one in

the UK.) However, let's stay with the page for a moment, and notice the impact of its materiality on the writing process. In fact, let's experiment with a key 'practice on the page' right now.

Freefall writing

Find an actual piece of paper and a writing implement – a pen or a pencil. Also, find a way of setting a time limit of 5 to 10 minutes. Write at the top of the sheet of paper, 'I remember...'. Start the timer and now just WRITE whatever is prompted by those words, for 5, 7 or 10 minutes. It is very important that as you write you don't stop and edit what you've written. Don't go back to correct grammatical mistakes or spelling. For whatever time you have set yourself, just write. If you can't figure out what more you want to say in relation to the theme, 'I remember', just write, 'I can't think of anything more I want to say' and the embodied feelings around that until something else arises.

After your allotted time of writing in this way, reflect on your experience.

- How was it different from your experience of writing through a computer keyboard?
- Did you notice any changes in your breathing, your posture or body as you wrote in this way?
- What did you notice about what you wrote, itself? Did this process take you to places you had not anticipated?

A number of authors who teach creative writing, such as Natalie Goldberg (2005), Judy Reeves (2010) and Barbara Turner-Vesselago (2013), advocate the benefits of writing directly onto material paper. Among other advantages of this practice, handwriting establishes a different rhythm than the staccato action of typing through a keyboard. It may feel more fluid or more awkward. Either is good, potentially inviting something different from you or from a different place in you. For some, handwriting can evoke childhood, or a sense of not being good at

something. For others it can feel unruly, disruptive or freer. Julia Cameron describes this necessary stage in writing as the 'suicide of "nice" self' (1994: 7). Handwriting and the instruction not to go back and correct what you have written allows what you are writing to move forward uninhibited by critical voices requiring you to 'get things right'. When typing it is tempting to start correcting and perfecting, but this usually results in writing which stays safe and predictable. Instead, write fast, longhand. Use up all the paper, draw and squiggle if you like. Don't be tidy. Don't pause to edit. Go 'fear-ward' (Goldberg, 2005). If you feel your heart in your mouth or your stomach churning, keep writing.

This activity, known as 'Freefall Writing', is a bodily based practice Donna uses frequently, especially when she is writing an article and is not sure what needs to be said next. As she describes it:

In those instances I write 'What this article is trying to say is ...' at the top of the page and allow myself to write. I frequently discover a kernel of insight that I just can't unearth by 'thinking' about what I want to say. The bodily process of writing seems to allow things I don't 'know' rationally to emerge. Additionally, the longer I keep 'writing freefall', the quality of the material invariably improves. In my experience, a good deal of 'garbage' gets vented in the first three or four minutes of writing – all of the things I think I 'should say', or 'should know' – but the real gems come after those first few minutes. So setting your timer for ten, rather than five minutes – or for twenty, rather than ten minutes, can be very beneficial. Don't worry if while you are writing there is a critical voice haranguing you to stop because what you are doing is a waste of time. In my experience, I certainly waste enough time staring at an empty screen or wrestling the 'perfect sentence' to the page (or screen) when I'm writing 'normally'. Ten or twenty minutes of freefall writing is rarely a 'waste of time'; it is much more likely to be a liberation.

Stream of consciousness writing

As well as 'freefall writing', others, such as Julia Cameron (1995), advocate the benefits of starting each day with 'stream of

consciousness' writing. Cameron calls these 'Morning Pages', and they are the equivalent of morning stretches for writers. Like freefall writing, they are done in longhand without stopping to correct or edit what has been written for a certain period of time or over a certain number of pages (Cameron suggests three). Unlike freefall writing, they are not focused on a particular topic, but instead aim to capture a less processed version of 'where you are' as you are writing them.

Sometimes writing stream of consciousness or freefall with the non-dominant hand can reveal new insights and directions for writing. In the *The Power of Your Other Hand* (2001), Lucia Capacchione describes how one's non-dominant hand can unmask insights the body knows, but which the mind inhibits from arising. Although, or perhaps because, slower, non-dominant hand writing is less at the mercy of the rational mind, insights become available which one doesn't rationally 'know' well enough to be able to articulate in writing.

Both of these practices recognize the entanglement of body and mind in the writing process. They frequently tap into unconscious knowledge and understandings held in the body which the rational mind cannot access by just churning around itself. The physical practice of moving the hand across the page (rather than tapping into a keyboard) often allows a different, less censored part of us to be expressed. After a session of 'freefall writing' or 'morning pages', Donna often finds herself reflecting, 'I never knew I knew that!' For Amanda, handwriting often invites a more transgressive or courageous voice – the one that says 'dare I say that?'

'Sketchbooks' and journaling

As an another 'on the page' practice, Amanda always has handwritten notebooks 'on the go' which contain a mixture of reflections and notes about things she is reading, writing or planning. These notebooks are dated and she refers back to them when writing or doing research. They have a loose index on

the front page where she lists what's in them – a key reference she made notes about, a set of teaching experiences or an article she was preparing at the time. In writing this chapter, Amanda went back through these notebooks and found quotes, sources and reflections about writing that helped her surface her own and others' prior wisdom about writing with bodies. In her research of composers, Donna found many musicians carried these 'sketchbooks'. Beethoven, for example, used to put everything into them: shopping lists, accounts, oh, and the odd bar of the Eroica Symphony!

What is it that is useful about these physical books with their handwriting, rather than a laptop? First, they each have a particular colour and 'look' which is an aid to remembering what is in them and why one bundle of insights, memories and experiences might be relevant to current writing. Second, the books can be written anywhere: in bed, the park, at the beach or on the train. They can be carried easily and they have a looser shape and feel that lends itself to recipes being added or reminders or observations that have no special status as 'work'. They don't have to 'earn their keep' as significant but can be sketchy and inconsequential.

Both of us also incorporate journaling (ideally in longhand) in our leadership teaching. In the 10-week MBA Leadership subject that Amanda teaches, students are encouraged to write in journals that are for their eyes only. While for students the idea of writing by hand about what's going on is often seen as a bit wacky or self-indulgent, the best response is not with argument but with the encouragement to treat longhand writing as simply a case study in trying something novel. They are invited to notice any defences or discomfort that may arise and if something different emerges on the page.

Allowing the body into the writing in the ways described above can enable some filters of the rational mind to be bypassed. Embodied knowing can often be 'taboo',

a reservoir of less polite and more unruly desires, emotions or truths. But it also knows what 'matters', and in this way can fuel writing of power, whether that writing is for the academy or for wider audiences.

Further, and depending on what kind of writing we are engaged in, body practices like those described here can enable greater creativity and freedom. For example, studies of improvisation by jazz musicians suggest that in order to be creative we need to find ways of turning down the volume of the critical, evaluative parts of our brain that say 'you can't do that' or 'that sounded terrible, you are making a fool of yourself!' The way in which good musicians give themselves permission to experiment is to be in their bodies and to feel the flow and pulse of music. Similarly, for other composers and visual and performing artists who value spontaneity, the challenge is to get out of their heads and allow their senses to guide them.

Now, you may be quietly – or not so quietly – grumbling to yourself there's no room for all this creativity and longhand in academic research! The next section offers suggestions for activities which will support a more embodied approach to writing, however disembodied your field of research is or committed you are to your customary way of writing.

Practices off the Page

Noticing embodied responses

What excites and enlivens your body when you are not writing? One of the important aspects of writing from the body is to take clues about important subjects for research from wider experiences that move or surprise you. This was the impetus for an article Donna wrote: 'Leading beautifully: How mastery, congruence and purpose create the aesthetic of embodied leadership practice' (Ladkin, 2008). She describes:

While attending a concert in which Bobby McFerrin was interacting with the audience, I became aware of just how engaged I was – and how engaged the other 5000 people in the Royal Albert Hall also seemed to be. McFerrin had a mostly middle class, white, British crowd clapping and stomping their feet in a most uncharacteristic way! This experience was the impetus for a subsequent body of work exploring the aesthetic dimension of leadership, and the body's role in both producing and experiencing charismatic leadership (Ladkin, 2006) and authentic leadership (Ladkin & Taylor, 2010). The point here is that during every day experiences, our bodies are telling us what enlivens us, as well as what puts us to sleep.

Moving, stretching, walking

Writing can be deeply claustrophobic where, for example, on the fifteenth draft you find yourself back writing the identical sentence you jettisoned three versions ago. Among the best antidotes to 'stuckness' is to do something physical. It doesn't have to be elaborate to deliver benefits: try hunching your shoulders up and releasing them, slowly turning your head from side to side while consciously breathing, or clenching and relaxing your jaw. Simple physical 'moves' help 'move' our writing: by helping us connect to feelings we had missed; by permitting ourselves more looseness and freedom; or by reminding us of the 'big picture' of our lives, appreciative of having the space and opportunity to write.

This kind of embodied writing engagement is also fostered by attending to the sights, sounds, smells and feelings evoked by the physical world. What is your way of re-connecting to your materiality and that of the world around you? For Donna it is walking. Attending to the walk – the colours of trees and flowers, the sounds of grumbling truck engines or chattering birds, the smells of cut grass, the feel of the feet as they reliably convey us across a field – is crucial. The rhythm of walking itself, as well as the way it brings you into contact with the wider world in its intricacies, offers inspiration and perspective when I'm feeling 'locked in' as

a writer. While walking, Donna advises not to consciously ‘think’ about the writing. The benefits are in walking rather than using it as a way of just taking the whirring mind ‘out’, where it can whirl in the presence of fresh air.

Sometimes tearing oneself away from the writing can feel hard. In editing this chapter, Amanda has come to precisely this point here, saying ‘If I just have 10 more minutes with this I should be able to work out the perfect form of words here!’ More often than not the 10 minutes turn into 30 and the piece is no further forward. Immersing oneself in something physical is the necessary circuit breaker. For Amanda, this might also be a walk, or going for a bike ride or a swim if it’s summer. Alternatively, it may be pulling a few weeds out of the garden, digging over the compost or having a conversation with her chooks (who don’t care about writing but have other wisdom to share).

The important point is that writing which is alive, vivid and inspirational is informed by body-based sensitivity and apprehension. Inviting the body into writing happens both in the act of writing itself, and in the ways we move, breathe and notice when we aren’t typing on a keyboard or holding pen in hand.

YOU, YOUR BODY AND YOUR WRITING

Those of you reading this chapter (and having made it this far) will probably have absorbed – or had drummed into you – norms and conventions about how (academic) writing *should* be done. Our desire has been to unsettle those assumptions and to encourage you to engage with the intelligence of the body as well as the mind. There are many ways of writing with, from and through the body and we hope some of our examples inspire you to notice and experiment with your own bodily processes in writing.

Catching the wisdom of embodied knowing and bringing it into words on the page is not an easy achievement. Frequently, in the

writing of this chapter, we have said to one another, ‘but how do we convey that visceral notion in words?’ Writing the ‘body’ of this chapter has itself been an embodied process, despite the fact that our bodies are separated by thousands of miles. Our own bodies have infused the writing, enabling each of us to help the other see, and sometimes ditch, ‘naturalisms of style and attitude’ that too often don’t add much (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005: 975). We’ve let go a lot of footnotes. We’ve jettisoned a lot of capital ‘R’ research, guessing that you probably do lots of reading of that kind of writing already. Our own embodied tunings have prompted us to shorten sentences, remove adjectives, to de-clutter and be direct. As we swapped drafts, we invited the other ‘body’ to ‘kill our darlings’ – the ideas and bits of writing that we had become rather attached to but which turned out to be not so original or useful. Perhaps we should have killed more!

We know, and we know you know, the temptations of reproducing the customary discourses and disembodied languages of your disciplines. You may get published! But there are enough examples of embodied writing that, one way or another, have won audiences, and equally importantly, have elicited deeper insight, even thrill and enjoyment. Good writing – powerful or surprising writing that has the capacity to change the reader’s understanding of the world – comes from writing daringly through our bodies.

REFERENCES

- Bathurst, R., & Messervy, A. (2014) ‘Bill Clinton and the end of leadership’, in Donna Ladkin and Steve Taylor (eds.), *The Physicality of Leadership: Gesture, entanglement, taboo, possibilities*. Monographs in Leadership and Management, Vol 6. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing. pp. 199–218.
- Bell, E., & Sinclair, A. (2014) ‘Reclaiming eroticism in the academy’, *Organization*, 21(2): 268–280.

- Cameron, J. (1994) *The Artist's Way*. UK: Pan Books.
- Capacchione, L. (2001) *The Power of Your Other Hand*. Wayne, NJ: New Page Books.
- Coetzee, J.M. (2007) *Diary of a Bad Year*. Melbourne: Text Publishing.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990) *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Cunliffe, A., & Coupland, C. (2011) 'From hero to villain to hero: Making experience sensible through embodied narrative sensemaking', *Human Relations*, 65(1): 63–88.
- Gallop, J. (1988) *Thinking Through the Body*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Gallop, J. (1995) The teacher's breasts. *Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture*, 17(1): 3–15.
- Goldberg, N. (2005) *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the writer within*. Boston: Shambhala Press.
- Grey, C., & Sinclair, A. (2006) 'Writing differently', *Organization*, 13(3): 443–453.
- Hindman, J.E. (2002). 'Writing an important body of scholarship: A proposal for an embodied rhetoric of professional practice', *JAC: A Journal of Composition Theory*, 22(1) 93–118.
- Ivanič, R. (1998) *Writing and Identity: The discursive construction of identity in academic writing*. Amsterdam, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Co.
- Ladkin, D. (2006) 'The enchantment of the charismatic leader: Charisma reconsidered as aesthetic encounter', *Leadership*, 2(2): 165–179.
- Ladkin, D. (2008) 'Leading beautifully: How mastery, congruence and purpose create the aesthetic of embodied leadership practice', *The Leadership Quarterly*, 19(1): 31–41.
- Ladkin, D. (2013) 'From perception to flesh: A phenomenological account of the felt experience of leadership', *Leadership*, 9(3): 320–34.
- Ladkin, D., & Taylor, S. (2010) 'Enacting the "true self": Towards a theory of embodied authentic leadership', *The Leadership Quarterly*, 21(1): 64–74.
- Ladkin, D., & Taylor, S. (eds.) (2014) *The Physicality of Leadership: Gesture, entanglement, taboo, possibilities*. Monographs in Leadership and Management, Vol 6. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing.
- Merilainen, S., Tienari, J. and Valtonen, A. (2015) 'Headhunters and the "ideal" executive body'. *Organization* 22(1): 3–22.
- Metcalfe, B. (2003, July) *Writing Through the Body: Autobiography, femininity and organization*, paper presented at the Critical Management Studies Conference, Lancaster University.
- Michel, A. (2011) 'Transcending socialization: A nine-year ethnography of the body's role in organizational control and knowledge workers' transformation', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 56(3): 325–368.
- Phillips, M. (2014) 'Leadership, eroticism and abjection: *Star Trek* and the Borg Queen', in Donna Ladkin and Steve Taylor (eds.), *The Physicality of Leadership: Gesture, entanglement, taboo, possibilities*. Monographs in Leadership and Management, Vol 6. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing. pp. 155–175.
- Reeves, J. (2010) *A Writer's Book of Days*. Novato, CA: New World Library.
- Richardson, L. (1997) 'Skirting a pleated text: De-disciplining an academic life', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3(3): 295–303.
- Richardson, L., & St. Pierre, E.A. (2000) 'Writing: A method of inquiry', in N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. pp. 923–948.
- Schwartz-Shea, P., & Yanow, D. (2009) 'Reading and writing as method: In search of trustworthy texts', in S. Ybema, D. Yanow, H. Wels and F. Kamsteeg (eds.), *Organizational Ethnography: Studying the complexities of everyday life*. London: Sage. pp. 56–82.
- Schwartz-Shea, P., & Yanow, D. (2012) *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and processes*. New York: Routledge.
- Sinclair, A. (2005a) 'Body possibilities in leadership', *Leadership*, 1(4): 387–406.
- Sinclair, A. (2005b) 'Body and management pedagogy', *Gender, Work & Organization*, 12(1): 89–104.
- Sinclair, A. (2010) 'Placing self: How might we place ourselves differently in studying leadership?', *Leadership*, 6(4): 447–460.
- Sinclair, A. (2013) 'A material dean', *Leadership Special Issue: The Materiality of Leadership*, 9(3): 436–443.

- Sinclair, A. (2014) 'On knees, breasts and being fully human in leadership', in Donna Ladkin and Steve Taylor (eds.), *The Physicality of Leadership: Gesture, entanglement, taboo, possibilities*. Monographs in Leadership and Management, Vol 6. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing. pp. 175–195.
- Turner-Vesselago, B. (2013) *Writing Without a Parachute: The art of freefall*. Bristol: Vala Press.
- Vachhani, S. (2012) 'The subordination of the feminine? Developing a critical feminist approach to the Psychoanalysis of organizations', *Organization Studies*, 33(9): 1237–1255.
- Varela, F., Thompson, E. & Rosch, E. (1993) *The Embodied Mind*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Intersectionality and Qualitative Research

Jenny K. Rodriguez

INTRODUCTION

Intersectionality is one of the most influential advances in the theory, research, and practice of gender and diversity scholarship. It is considered an instrumental tool to study the reciprocities of gender and other categories of difference and how these are created, reproduced, and perpetuated as part of systems of power and inequality that sustain privilege and disadvantage in everyday life (Anthias, 2005; Phoenix, 2006; Winker & Degele, 2011). A foundational argument posed by intersectionality is that gender by itself is insufficient to determine either a superordinate or subordinate position; instead, we must look at how social identities as well as socially constructed markers of group membership influence beliefs and experiences of gender and are used to allocate power (Hurtado, 1989: 833; Shields, 2008). Building on this foundation, intersectionality is now used to understand multiple subordinate-group identities in order to show that gender processes ‘intersect with and are shaped by race and class

processes, as well as other forms of inequality and exclusion’ (Acker, 2012: 214).

The treatment of intersectionality in research has been framed by the exploration of ‘the relationship among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations’ (McCall, 2005: 1771). The combination of intersectionality’s interest in understanding systems of power, inequality, and oppression, alongside the orientation of qualitative research in understanding fluidity instead of fixed or ‘true’ meaning, makes intersectionality very suitable for adopting qualitative research approaches. Some scholars (e.g. Hancock, 2007a; Bowleg, 2008) have hinted that qualitative research methods are more suitable for intersectional work as they support intersectionality’s primary aims of critiquing and disrupting understandings about people’s experiences through the focus on multivocality, knowledges, and the politics of empowerment (Hancock, 2007b).

In this chapter, I focus on the use of intersectionality in qualitative research, discussing

its opportunities and challenges, and providing examples of intersectional work primarily across disciplines in the social sciences and the humanities that have used qualitative methodologies and methods. Following this introduction, the first section discusses intersectionality, focusing on its meaning and scope, and how this has shaped understandings of what an intersectional approach is. A second section discusses the notion of ‘qualitative intersectional research’, identifying ways in which intersectionality as a research paradigm can be embedded in qualitative research. A third section discusses the practical aspects of conducting qualitative intersectional research. This discussion is framed in relation to issues pertaining to research design, intersectional analysis and interpretation, and intersectional reflexivity. The final section concludes the chapter identifying the contribution of intersectionality to qualitative research, and identifying future directions in the use of qualitative research methods in intersectional work.

INTRODUCING INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality refers to a critical insight that emerges from how the reciprocal construction of categories of difference shapes the identities and experiences of individuals and groups (Collins, 2015). More concretely, it could be exemplified by highlighting the diverse experiences of individuals and groups; for instance, if we were to explore white women’s experiences of oppression and Asian women’s experiences of oppression, while we could argue that both might experience sexism, white women’s oppression is linked to privilege by virtue of being white, whereas for Asian women oppression is likely to be linked to migration and intergenerational experiences (Few, 2007). Underpinning intersectionality is the understanding that disadvantage, inequality, and oppression operate within multiple, converging, or interwoven systems of power relations (Carastathis, 2014a). The

term was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 and emerged from a historical narrative about race and gender traced back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the US (Hancock, 2013). In particular, Crenshaw’s work builds on ideas posed by Black, Chicana, Latina, and other women of color feminists and activists during the 1970s and 1980s (e.g. Gloria Anzaldúa, Angela Davis, Patricia Hill Collins, Audre Lorde, Chandra Mohanty, Cherrie Moraga, as well as Barbara and Beverly Smith, Demita Frazier, and other members of the Black lesbian feminist group, the Combahee River Collective). They argued that their experiences of oppressions were interlocked but ignored and invisibilized by structural systems due to a separate focus on gender and race.

Crenshaw (1989, 1991) expanded on this idea in the field of law studies, arguing that there was limited understanding of the experiences of disadvantage and marginalization of Black women as a result of the prevalence of single-issue analyses that informed judicial decisions. She argued that the prevalent model in employment discrimination litigation had major conceptual limitations because despite Black women experiencing discrimination ‘in ways that are both similar to and different from those experienced by white women and Black men’ (Crenshaw, 1989: 149), the framework did not allow for the possibility of these experiences to be used by Black women to obtain social justice. The complexity of this argument is summarized by E. R. Cole (2009), who noted that Black women could have (a) similar experiences to those of White women on the counts of gender, and those of Black men on the counts of race; (b) different experiences to each of these groups as they could experience double discrimination from the combined effects of discriminatory practices based on gender and based on race, which neither White women nor Black men would experience simultaneously; and (c) experiences specific to their status as ‘Black women’, that is, not the sum of gender and race but rather something unique to the subjective and structural articulation of being ‘Black women’.¹

Following the development of intersectionality in theoretical, conceptual, and empirical terms, intersectionality is used as a critical alternative to identity politics that considers differences both within and between groups (Prins, 2006). There is an implicit assumption that the intersection of categories of difference positions individuals and groups in particular theoretical points and that adopting an intersectional approach allows for a more comprehensive exploration of those theoretical points to understand experiences of disadvantage and marginality, and contest dominant understandings of gender processes.

There are diverse understandings of intersectionality; some scholars refer to it as a theory, others as a construct or heuristic device, and others as a reading strategy for feminist analysis (Davis, 2008). Crenshaw (1991) has used the metaphor of a crossroads or traffic at an intersection to illustrate intersectionality, arguing that diverse factors flow from different directions and only by looking at the interconnection of these factors is one able to understand causes, characteristics, and consequences of events that happen at the intersection. When taking the crossroads metaphor to try to understand multiple and simultaneous subjectivities and inequalities, Grillo's (2013) explanation provides much insight. She notes that:

Each of us in the world sits at the intersection of many categories: She is Latina, woman, short, mother, lesbian, daughter, brown-eyed, long-haired, quick-witted, short-tempered, worker, stubborn. At any one moment in time and in space, some of these categories are central to her being and her ability to act in the world. Others matter not at all. Some categories, such as race, gender, class, and sexual orientation, are important most of the time. Others are rarely important. When something or someone highlights one of her categories and brings it to the fore, she may be a dominant person, an oppressor of others. Other times, even most of the time, she may be oppressed herself. (p. 17)

Methodologically, there have been interesting developments in the use of intersectionality and the longstanding 'quantitative versus qualitative' debate has also pervaded intersectional

work (Bowleg, 2008). On the one hand, the importance of being able to 'demonstrate' discrimination and disadvantage has meant that quantitative approaches could be seen as more effective to translate intersectionality approaches into concrete actions. On the other hand, we could argue that understanding marginalized groups is inherently a qualitative question because while quantitative approaches might help us to demonstrate some instances of discrimination or unequal treatment, which provide useful insight that could inform outcomes, they do not fully explain or help us to understand the more complex dimensions of systems of privilege and oppression, such as how individuals experience them in their daily lives and how shifts in power, privilege, disadvantage, and inequality occur. For example, reflecting on what explains the gender divide between Blacks and the racial divide among all Americans, Simpson (2007) notes that 'many social science researchers have relied on survey data, much of which is inadequate for answering these questions [...] because issue cleavages among Black Americans are difficult to locate using surveys' (p. 152).

QUALITATIVE INTERSECTIONAL RESEARCH: KEY ASPECTS

In order to delve into the use of intersectionality in qualitative research, a good starting point is to acknowledge that while 'intersectionality' can be difficult to grasp because it does not refer to a single thing but to a set of things interconnected in ways that are not readily visible, this provides an excellent opportunity to craft research projects flexibly and inclusively. Given its understanding as, among other things, theory, epistemology, paradigm, epistemic sensibilization, methodology, and method (Hancock, 2007a; Geerts & Van der Tuin, 2013; Roth, 2013), there is much scope for researchers to focus on alternative explanations about lived experiences. As such, developing qualitative intersectional research

requires thinking about (a) how we understand social categories of difference, (b) what we want from intersectionality, and (c) how we operationalize the intersections between social categories of difference. In this section, I expand on these three points, explaining key issues to consider and providing examples:

Understanding Social Divisions

Understanding social divisions starts off with the question: *What is our position about how the intersectionality of social divisions happens?* Intersections are normally understood as operating as either additive or constitutive processes. As an additive process (also known as the unitary approach), categories of difference are seen as having distinct social properties. For example, an additive exploration would consider how gender (being female), ethnicity (being Black), and sexual orientation (being lesbian) would each impact the life of a lesbian Black woman. Conversely, using the understanding of intersections as constitutive processes (also known as the multiplicative approach), the interaction between social categories is at the center of the work. For example, a multiplicative exploration would consider what it means to be a lesbian Black woman from a perspective that assumes that the experience is shaped by how the individual is never ‘a woman’ or ‘a lesbian’ or ‘Black’ but rather the identity and social position is always about the simultaneous intersection of the three categories.

Both understandings have been criticized. Despite being widely used in policy-making, the linearity of the additive approach fails to consider how one social category impacts the next and ignores that identities are dynamic, shifting, and multiplex constructions (McCall, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Hillsburg, 2013). The multiplicative approach, on the other hand, although seen to convey more genuinely the ethos of intersectionality, is considered difficult to operationalize given that it is unlikely that a research project will be able to account

for the complexity it entails (Hillsburg, 2013). Nevertheless, a multiplicative approach is helpful because it shows how categories of difference are intertwined and mutually constitutive. It makes visible dynamics that had generally been overlooked in gender scholarship; such as the way social locations (that include gender but are not only or centrally about gender) emerge from the way a particular status is created within social structures to perpetuate systems of privilege and disadvantage (Andersen & Collins, 2015).

Understanding the Purpose of Intersectionality

After positioning ourselves in relation to the way the intersections operate, we must pay attention to intersections themselves. This is about understanding the form that intersectionality will take in a research project and answers the question: *What should intersectionality help us to highlight?* This is relevant because the way we theorize social divisions is not only determined by how we understand these divisions but also what we want the intersections to show in context (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Davis (2008) has noted that central to intersectionality are questions such as ‘how race is “gendered” and how gender is “racialized”, and how both are linked to the continuities and transformations of social class’ (p. 71).

Crenshaw (1991) has referred to three ways in which the intersectionality theme can be understood that highlight particular points: structural, political, and representational intersectionality. *Structural intersectionality* refers to the ‘multilayered and routinized forms of domination’ (p. 1254), those that emerge as unintended consequences of existing social structures created to organize and support different social groups. Crenshaw (1997) exemplifies this theme by alluding to ‘the way in which rape crisis centers in poor minority or immigrant communities must address rape survivors’ homelessness, unemployment, poverty, hunger, distrust of

law-enforcement officers, and perhaps their lack of English-language skills as well, often hindered by funding agency policies premised on the needs of middle-class whites rape survivors' (p. 250). Using the same example, we could also highlight the way in which structures of support for rape victims have systematically excluded male rape victims.

Crenshaw (1997) frames *political intersectionality* as how feminist and antiracist politics have helped in the marginalization of issues facing Black women because 'frameworks highlighting *race* and those highlighting *gender* are oppositional and contradictory' (p. 250, Emphasis in original). This theme is normally linked to the exploration of public policies and how/whether intersectionality is embedded in their articulation (what is included and how it is framed) and in the way policy-related outcomes are defined (how/whether the outcomes reflect the issues linked to individuals' overlapping identities). For example, analyses of gender equality policy in Europe (e.g. Lombardo & Verloo, 2009a, 2009b; Verloo, 2013) have focused on political intersectionality to highlight the failure of policy frameworks to account for diverse actors and their intersecting and interconnected experiences.

Two interesting examples that show the complexity in design that allows the exploration of political intersectionality are the works of Verloo and Lombardo (2007) and Borchorst and Teigen (2010). Verloo and Lombardo (2007) propose critical frame analysis, a reflexive methodology, to 'enable the researcher to give visibility to processes of exclusions that exist in the formulation of policy discourses' (p. 38). They argue for (a) not using definitions to allow for fluidity of meaning in constructs used, (b) using sensitizing questions to analyze policy documents, and (c) developing coding before the analysis to allow for freedom and flexibility in the interpretation of variations. They see this methodology as helpful to researchers to assess and detect inconsistencies in relation to the correspondence within a policy text between

the problem diagnosed and the prognosis or solution to it. Borchorst and Teigen's (2010) work analyzes gender and integration policies in Scandinavia, adopting a multi-layered approach that explores the micro (every day), meso (movements and organizations), and macro (national policy-making) levels. Their argument is that within these levels, dynamics, institutions, and actors interact and shape political agendas in distinct ways, and so provide more insight into 'how inequalities and their intersections are relevant to political strategies' (Verloo, 2006: 213).

Finally, *representational intersectionality* alludes to the cultural construction and 'depiction through text, language, images, media, of groups and individuals in society' (Jordan-Zachery, 2013: 108). This theme puts importance on the way intersectional imaginaries are created, which not only feeds on stereotypes but also explains symbolic exclusions and boundaries from categories of people in particular narratives about work and employment (Mavin et al., 2010; Holtzman & Sharpe, 2014). This is the most under-researched theme and one for which there is significant potential in order to understand how 'the everyday' shapes institutions, structures, and practices. Most discussions have focused on the analysis of media artifacts – e.g. Boyle and Brayton's (2012) analysis of masculinity in a Hollywood film – and in particular the analysis of race in films, such as Peña Ovalle's (2011) discussion of how the work of Latin women in Hollywood films is framed by a legacy of racialized and sexualized imagery.

More analysis is needed, however, on the experiences of individuals and groups as a result of these media imaginaries. For instance, in a piece for THUMP (Okereke, 2014), an electronic music and culture channel from Vice Magazine, Kele Okereke, singer of the British indie band Bloc Party, wrote about the challenges connected to his identity as a gay Black man in a music scene that was predominantly dominated by straight White males. He also alluded to his 'lack of lineage' due to the limited exposure of 'people

like him' in the scene. In his piece he asked: 'Can anyone remember the last time a major British music magazine put a non-white face on its cover?' This type of question, which speaks about how individuals and groups are affected by representational intersectionality, is one of the issues that remains largely under-researched as most works focus on representations themselves, not on their impact and how they lead to exclusion.

Analyzing the issue raised by Okereke using representational intersectionality, we would ask ourselves questions such as: How are specific identities framed in popular music? What role do the media play in the production and diffusion of particular identities in popular music? How are dominant and marginalized identities negotiated through different types of music and what consequences does this have on individuals and groups working in this field? Crenshaw (1997) notes that race and gender images readily available in our culture converge to create particular narratives considered appropriate for a specific group; analyzing these questions would be helped by a sociocultural framing that looks into how racialized and sexualized rhetoric is constructed in media and society. Similarly, the analysis should explore the impact of the systematic exposure of specific identities, and their consequent legitimization in the collective popular imaginary (Holland et al., 1998) for those in marginalized and dominant positions.

Following this discussion, Table 26.1 explains these themes and their key questions and provides examples of works using qualitative research methods (also see Table 26.2 for a detailed explanation of the specific approaches and methods adopted by some of these works).

Operationalizing Intersectionality

The empirical operationalization of intersectionality is perhaps the most challenging aspect in research terms. In operationalizing intersectionality, we look at two main questions: *How*

do we make work intersectional? And how do we make categories of social difference operational for our research in a way that (a) captures the intersections and (b) captures how the intersections of the categories play out in societal structures of power, privilege, and oppression? In methodological terms, the first question goes to the root of the epistemology of intersectionality. Going back to Simpson's (2007) idea, the uniqueness of intersectionality as a framework requires an alternative epistemology, which Collins (2001) has termed a 'Black feminist epistemology' and she sees as 'consistent with Black women's criteria for substantiated knowledge and with our criteria for methodological adequacy' (p. 256). This epistemology would be characterized by four criteria:

- 1 *Using lived experience as a criterion of meaning* – She argues that this form of knowledge 'allow[s] for subjectivity between the knower and the known, rest[s] in the women themselves (not in higher authorities), and [is] experienced directly in the world (not through abstractions)'. (p. 259)
- 2 *Using dialogue in assessing knowledge claims* – This refers to prioritising oral traditions in the knowledge validation process through the active participation of all individuals.
- 3 *Embedding the ethics of caring in the knowledge validation process* – This is related to valuing personal expressiveness and connectedness; it relies on acknowledging individual uniqueness, the appropriateness of emotions in dialogue and the capacity for empathy.
- 4 *Exercising ethics of accountability* – This refers to making people accountable for their knowledge claims; linked what is said to the personal credibility of an individual 'as an ethical human being'. (p. 265)

Using Collins's (2001) ideas and taking advantage of the flexibility of intersectionality to account for meanings, articulations, and shifts in the way individuals make sense of their social categories of difference and those of others, the importance of crafting cannot be stressed enough (see Cunliffe, 2011). Crafting is about taking intersectionality's interest in the features and quality of

Table 26.1 Intersectionality themes using qualitative research methods

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Understanding</i>	<i>Important questions</i>	<i>Examples of scholarly work</i>
<i>Structural intersectionality</i>	Institutional and structural elements that shape racism, sexism, and classism. 'How individual's legal status or social needs marginalize them as their identity statuses converge' (Shields, 2008: 304).	'How and when does racism amplify sexism? How and when does class exploitation reinforce homophobia? How and when does homophobia amplify racism?' (Verloo, 2006: 213).	Dottolo and Stewart (2008) Kvasny et al. (2009) Boogaard and Roggeband (2010)
<i>Political intersectionality</i>	The role of feminist and antiracist politics in marginalizing disadvantaged groups. 'Political organising (within social movements) and political processes (adopted by governmental and other organisations)' (Fish, 2008).	'How and where does feminism marginalize ethnic minorities or disabled women? How and where do measures on sexual equality or on racism marginalize women? How and where do gender equality policies marginalize lesbians?' (Verloo, 2006: 213). 'How can knowledge produced about multiple inequalities contribute to tackling discrimination? What are the political costs and barriers to producing such knowledge?' (Fish, 2008). 'How do specific groups generate political attention to their claims and shape political discourse?' (Borchorst & Teigen, 2010).	Verloo and Lombardo (2007) Lombardo and Verloo (2009a) Lombardo and Verloo (2009b) Borchorst and Teigen (2010) Lombardo and Agustín (2012) Verloo (2013) Cruells López and Ruiz García (2014)
<i>Representational intersectionality</i>	Material and symbolic production of social divisions that devalue individuals and groups within popular culture. Multiple stereotypes in cultural presentations (e.g. films, adverts, soap operas, music, theatre, paintings, displays, etc.) to fix representations of dominant and marginalized groups.	How are individuals and groups depicted in the media? How are individuals and groups included in or excluded from particular social categories in collective imaginaries? What unique and specific narratives do representations of individuals and groups that shape the legal, institutional and structural frameworks that affect them?	Butz (2008) Gill (2009) James (2011) Bünz (2012) Chapman (2015)

experiences of disadvantage, discrimination, and oppression as a starting point for decisions about design, methodology, and method. In the operationalization of intersectionality, the analytical foci should include: (a) identities of individuals and groups considered 'different', (b) the categories of difference, (c) processes of differentiation, and (d) systems of domination (Dhamoon, 2011).

In that respect, qualitative methodologies, especially those that provide the space for the simultaneous collection of detailed individual, group, and contextual data, would be particularly useful. I expand on this last point in the next section of this chapter.

The second question is about the operationalization of categories, which would determine the methodological decisions about

Table 26.2 Examples of intersectional research using qualitative methods

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Research question(s)</i>	<i>Intersectional focus</i>	<i>Sample/Sampling</i>	<i>Methods</i>	<i>Data analysis</i>
Adamson and Johansson (2016)	'How is embodiment mobilized or retired in constituting the credible professional? How does this occur through intercorporeal interaction in different work settings? How can an embodied intersectionality framework further our theorization of professional embodiment' (p. 3).	Embodied intersectionality framework, professional credibility	26 practicing counseling psychologists (23 women and 3 men) in Russia recruited through email, via professional websites and snowballing.	Life-story interviews	Narrative analysis
Adib and Guerrier (2003)	How is the intersectionality of gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, and class articulated in the narratives of women at work within operative level jobs in the hotel industry?	Gender, nationality, race, ethnicity, and class	15 hotel management students from a London university returning from a compulsory one-year industrial placement where they worked as 'receptionists, waitresses, chambermaids and reservation staff as well as in duty management in hotels in the UK and abroad' (pp. 420–421).	Semi-structured interviews	Narrative analysis
Amrute (2016)	'Is being good at programming fixed in certain kinds of bodies?' (p. 14).	Race and class	50+ Indian men and women programmers on temporary work visas in Berlin, Germany, and 32 German, British, Australian, American, and Indian managers and programmers, all recruited at offices, via mutual contacts and at trade fairs.	Ethnography: individual and group participant observation, shadowing, and interviews	Ethnographic coding
Atewologun et al. (2016)	What identity-heightening episodes trigger meaning-making of intersecting senior, gender, and ethnic identities among British Asian and black women and men in their interactions with clients, subordinates, and superiors?	Gender and ethnicity	24 Black Ethnic Minority British nationals (12 women and 12 men), self-nominated for the study following an announcement of 'a study on senior minority ethnic men and women's identities promoted internally in a large UK public sector organization and a Big-4 Professional Services Firm' (p. 228).	Critical incident technique with daily diaries and interviews	Abductive analytical approach of narratives
Barnum and Zajicek (2008)	What gendered and sexualized representations of race (gendered race) and racialized representations of gender and sexuality (racialized gender) are present in visual media?	Race, gender, and sexuality	Diesel clothing advertisement campaign 'Nature: Love It While It Lasts'.	Purposeful sampling of a case study	Content and structuralist/semiotic analysis

Bell and Nkomo (2001)	What are the career experiences of Black women executives? Did they experience discrimination in their organizations? How did they perceive their roles? What were the obstacles they experienced? What were some of the joys of being in those positions? And how did their experiences differ from White women? (p. 11).	Gender, race, class, and professional identity	Black and White women in top/executive jobs in the New York Tri-state area and the Charlotte/Atlanta region, recruited via women's professional organizations and snowballing.	Life history interviews	Narrative analysis
Block and Corona (2014)	What is the racialized and gendered positioning of young migrants in increasingly diverse urban spaces in European societies?	Social class, race, ethnicity, and gender	Four young Latino boys living in Barcelona, Spain.	Interviews	Thematic progression
Boogaard and Roggeband (2010)	How does the mutually constitutive relationship between structure and agency operate in the social production of inequality at the intersection of multiple social identities?	Gender, ethnic identity, and organizational identity	Dutch Police Force (about 5000 employees) and 25 women and men from majority and minority groups.	Multi-situational case-study: direct observation, focus groups, organizational database data	Thematic coding, and inter-group and intra-group comparisons
Borchorst and Teigen (2010)	Does the intersectionality approach stand alone when structural aspects of inequality are in focus, or is it important to address different dimensions of inequality separately? How are multiple grounds of marginalization, oppression, and privilege in relation to class, gender, and ethnicity tackled (or not) in public policies?	Gender, ethnicity, and class	Policies of gender equality and integration in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.	Document analysis	Historical institutionalist analysis
Boyle and Brayton (2012)	How does 'expendability' relate with masculinity, physical labor, and aging?	Masculinity, ageing, class, muscularity, and race	Action-adventure film <i>The Expendables</i> (2010).	Film as text	Textual analysis
Bünz (2012)	What images do display exhibitions of prehistorical subjects convey? How are people (women, men, children, and elderly) presented? What stories are told? How can they be understood? (p. 98).	Gender, race, and appearance; subordinate and hegemonic femininities	The permanent exhibition <i>Prehistories 1</i> at the National Historical Museum in Stockholm, Sweden.	Observation	Visual narrative analysis and textual analysis

(Continued)

Table 26.2 Examples of intersectional research using qualitative methods (Continued)

Authors	Research question(s)	Intersectional focus	Sample/Sampling	Methods	Data analysis
Butz (2008)	What interlocking privileges reveal young hardcore punks' advantageous subject positions? To what extent do these adolescents reflect on the privileged backgrounds they come from? 'Do they acknowledge the advantages that go along with their allegedly-normative status as white male Americans? How do they deal with them and do they succeed in establishing a credible contra-position?' (p. 131).	Race and class	Three punk song lyrics.	Contextual close reading	Semiotic deconstruction analysis
Carrim and Nkomo (2016)	How do processes of racialization, gendering, and culturalization create and reinforce particular social locations in society and in the workplace? How do identities and categories interact and how do the institutionalized processes and systems by which they are formed, shaped, and reshaped over time operate? What role do sociohistorical political and cultural contexts play in managerial identity?	Racio-ethnicity, gender, and culture	13 South African women descendants of <i>passenger</i> Indians working in 'senior and top managerial positions from various South African organizations' (p. 264).	Life story interviews	Grounded theory approach to thematic analysis
Chapman (2015)	What are the norms of agency relating to veiling as experienced by Muslim women living everyday lives in northern European contexts? How do these women negotiate gender identity through their accounts and discussions of the veil?	Gender identity, Muslim veil	38 second-generation Muslim women in the UK and Denmark recruited via employment faith networks, places of education, mosques, and community projects in Copenhagen and London.	Individual and group interviews	Thematic analysis
Cruells López and Ruiz García (2014)	How and why has the <i>Indignados</i> (indignant or outraged people) movement in Spain incorporated intersectionality among inequalities?	Class, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity	Nine individuals and two groups of activists attending 13 assemblies of the <i>Indignados</i> (indignant or outraged people) movement taking place in Barcelona and Madrid, 32 documents, and information from digital networks and assembly/movement websites.	Document analysis, semi-structured interviews, group discussion	Frame analysis

Diamond and Butterworth (2008)	How do adolescent and young adult women develop their sexual orientation? What processes of sexual questioning do these women experience? What ongoing changes, developments, and self-reflections do the women experience regarding sexual attraction, behavior, and identity?	Sexual orientation, sexual identity, and gender identity	Four young sexual-minority women of a sample of 89 women who were participants in a 10-year longitudinal study of sexual identity development (first study published in 1998).	In-depth interviews (each woman interviewed 5 times over 10 years)	Narrative analysis
Dottolo and Stewart (2008)	'How did Black and White men and women who attended a racially integrated high school construct racial identities? Was the process different for Black and White participants? Specifically, how do both Black graduates and Whites express awareness of institutional power when discussing racial identities? Does gender matter in the discussion of racial identity?' (p. 351).	Gender, race, racial identity, and social class	38 middle-aged Black and White men and women high school graduates.	Interviews	Thematic analysis
Essers and Tedmanson (2014)	'How do female Muslim entrepreneurs of Turkish descent experience the highly polarized context of Muslim/non-Muslim relations in the Netherlands, and how does this experience impact on their multiple identities?' (p. 354).	Gender, ethnicity, and religion	15 Turkish entrepreneurs in The Netherlands recruited through migrant businesswomen networks and snowballing.	Semi-structured and life-narrative interviews	Narrative analysis
Essers et al. (2010)	How are gender and ethnicity implicated in Muslim women's entrepreneurial activities and experiences?	Gender, ethnicity, and religion	20 Muslim (Turkish/Moroccan) businesswomen in The Netherlands recruited through special interest organizations for entrepreneurs, networks of immigrant women, and snowballing.	Life story interviews	Narrative analysis
Gill (2009)	In what ways is sexualization gendered, racialized, and classed?	Sexualization, gender, race, and class	Adverts 'in mainstream media – terrestrial television, general interest newspapers and magazines, and "outdoors" advertising (on billboards, bus shelters and other public spaces)' (p. 139).	Visual and content analysis	Visual discourse analysis

(Continued)

Table 26.2 Examples of intersectional research using qualitative methods (Continued)

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Research question(s)</i>	<i>Intersectional focus</i>	<i>Sample/Sampling</i>	<i>Methods</i>	<i>Data analysis</i>
Halinyjo and Jonker (2016)	How is intersectionality recognized in hijab discrimination cases brought before the Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, and Dutch equality bodies?	Gender and religion	Documentation (e-mails, letters, and reports on telephone calls from complainants) pertaining to 14 legal cases of discrimination.	Document analysis	Qualitative content analysis, theory-guided analysis
Healy et al. (2011)	What are the experiences of Caribbean, Bangladeshi, and Pakistani women working in health, local government, and higher education in the UK?	Gender, ethnicity, and religion	50 people in public sector organizations (15 managers or experts [7 white, 8 BME] and 35 women) from Caribbean, Bangladeshi, and Pakistani backgrounds.	Interviews	Narrative analysis
James (2011)	How do Black men appropriate stereotypical White gay masculinity and/or non-American, non-White femininity?	Cultural appropriation, gender, sexuality and class	Music videos by contemporary Black male hip-hop artists.	Visual analysis	Visual discourse analysis
Johansson and Śliwa (2014)	'How do gender and foreignness, either separately or combined, affect these women's experiences in their workplaces, and in the broader academic environment? How and in which organizational contexts do gender and foreignness emerge as significant categories?' (p. 18).	Gender, foreignness	31 foreign women academics in business schools in the UK recruited through personal contacts, public staff information available from university websites, and snowballing.	Narrative interviews	Narrative analysis
Johansson and Śliwa (2016)	'How does language intersect with other processes of differentiation to produce particular social and organizational positions? What enabling or restricting effects of language are experienced and articulated by Polish migrant workers in the UK?' (p. 297).	Language, nationality, and in/exclusion	5 Polish migrants (2 women and 3 men) in the UK recruited through personal contacts and cold calling.	Life history interviews	Narrative analysis
Ko et al. (2013)	What are the life stories of women of color in physics, astrophysics, and astronomy?	Gender and race	23 women of color who worked in physics, astrophysics, and astronomy	Interviews (41 written and 10 oral)	Narrative analysis
Kwasny et al. (2009)	How does the intersection of gender, race, and class identities shape the experiences of Black female IT workers and learners in the US?	Gender, race, and class	Classroom cohort of 12 Black women attending their first IT courses at a community technology center and the classroom facilitator, and 123 Black women IT professionals.	Interviews (informal 30 mins and 90 mins), and observation	Thematic coding

Lee and Brotman (2011)	How do Canadian refugee policies, social institutions, and dominant discourses contribute to the sociopolitical construction of sexual minority refugees?	Migration and sexuality with a specific focus on identity, refugeeeness, and belonging	28 interviews with sexual minority refugees and their advocates in Canada recruited following 'six to eight months of community networking and knowledge exchange with key stakeholders in the community' (p. 252).	Community-based methodology, semi-structured interviews	Content analysis
Lloyd-Jones (2009)	How does an African-American woman administrator at a predominantly White university pursue the achievement ideology despite experiences and challenges that emerge from her race and gender? (p. 608).	Gender, race, and social class	Single case study of one African-American woman working as a senior-level administrator in the Southwestern United States, and archival records.	Semi-structured interviews and in-depth interviews	Open coding thematic analysis
Logie et al. (2011)	What are the experiences of stigma and discrimination, and coping methods of HIV-positive women from marginalized communities?	HIV, gender, race, sexual orientation, and sex work	104 HIV-positive women from marginalized communities in five cities across Ontario, Canada recruited 'via word of mouth and flyers in community agencies, including AIDS service organizations, LBQT community centers, and ethno-specific social/health service agencies serving women of diverse ethno-cultural origins' (p. 4).	Focus groups (12 English, two French, one Spanish)	Thematic analysis
Lombardo and Agustin (2012)	'What are the implications of the framing of intersectionality in the EU for the quality of gender equality policies?' (p. 483).	Gender equality, sex, racial and ethnic origin, disability, age, religion, and sexual orientation	42 EU documents on gender equality policy within the European QUING project, covering three policy issues: gender-based violence, intimate citizenship, and non-employment.	Document analysis	Frame analysis using standardized-question coding
Love et al. (2015)	How do Black women from varying generations articulate their perceptions about race?	Gender, race, age, and generational difference	183 Black women from three generational groups (27 millennials, 71 Gen-Xers and 85 Baby Boomers) in the US.	In-depth interviews, focus groups, and online survey	Thematic analysis, descriptive analysis, and memoing

(Continued)

Table 26.2 Examples of intersectional research using qualitative methods (Continued)

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Research question(s)</i>	<i>Intersectional focus</i>	<i>Sample/Sampling</i>	<i>Methods</i>	<i>Data analysis</i>
McConnell et al. (2016)	How do oppression, privilege, and power operate within counterspace settings, even for individuals with marginalized identities? How are challenging processes, particularly direct relational transactions, in dynamic transaction with each other to shape setting outcomes? How does intersectionality shape participants' experiences of the festival setting?	Gender, sexuality, and race	43 women attendees at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival (Michtfest) (attended by 3000–5000 women) recruited by approaching them during the festival, posting fliers around the festival, and snowballing.	Case study Interviews, online survey, and ethnographic participation (journaling and research team discussions)	Content analysis
Moorosi (2014)	What is the impact of a leadership training offered to practicing school leaders in South Africa?	Gender, race, and social class	287 participants from South African provinces that participated in a leadership development programme, 27 participants (e.g. school principals, deputies, heads of department) from schools and a training center, and evaluation findings from the leadership development program.	Survey Shadowing Interviews Observations	Thematic analysis
Narváez et al. (2009)	'How did respondents understand, organize, and script their self-descriptors (identities, statuses, and roles)? What meanings were ascribed to descriptors related to sexuality, gender, and ethnicity? How did they understand the interactions among self-descriptors and the interactions between self-descriptors and social contexts? How did respondents, through these interactions, create norms and behaviours that allowed them to cope with, to adapt to, or to contest the scripts implied by mainstream social environments (such as work, family, and church)?' (p. 72).	Sexuality, gender, and ethnicity	41 interviews of 524 respondents recruited using a purposive sampling strategy from 274 venues such as coffeehouses, public parks, bars, bookstores, special events, social or interest groups, and community organizations.	Ethnographic immersion Interviews	Narrative analysis using thematic coding

Nightingale (2011)	In which ways does the embodied performance of gender, caste, and other aspects of social difference collapse the distinction between the material and the symbolic in the production of social inequalities?	Gender, caste, and class	Individuals in the Mugu District of northwestern Nepal linked to community forestry management.	Ethnography	Narrative analysis
Nishida (2016)	How do disabled people – who often do not share their marginalized disability identity with their family members and other surrounding people – initiate and proceed with their political development? How is political development experienced by disabled people who occupy multiple marginalized identities?	Race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, age, education, family immigration status, and disability	7 participants who identified and are recognized as disability rights and/or disability justice activists within and beyond disability communities.	Life story interviews	Thematic coding analysis
Peña Ovalle (2011)	What does the emphasis on physical mobility tell us about the intersection of performance, racialized sexuality, and visual culture?	Gender, race, sexuality, in-betweenness, and racial mobility	Archival material (e.g. studio publicity, film reviews, and contractual negotiations) pertaining to the careers of five Latina Hollywood stars.	Archival method	Textual analysis
Prins (2006)	To what extent have life trajectories been marked by our early childhood experiences with the ethnic and cultural 'other'? 'What kind of lifestyle would each of us produce? How had our lives been affected by axes of difference and inequality such as gender, ethnicity, class and religion?' (p. 278).	Gender, ethnicity, class, and religion	25 Dutch and 20 Moluccan men and women who were the researchers' former primary school classmates.	Life-story narrative interviews	Narrative analysis
Ringrose (2007)	How are issues of race and racism being addressed in the curriculum and pedagogy of a Canadian School of Women's Studies? How do students experience a feminist antiracist curriculum, and what processes do they go through in negotiating the discourses circulating in the classroom?	Class, race, gender, and sexual identity	25 undergraduate students attending a course on 'women's diversity'.	Participant observation of larger class and small group discussions, and interviews	Foucauldian discourse analysis

(Continued)

Table 26.2 Examples of intersectional research using qualitative methods (Continued)

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Research question(s)</i>	<i>Intersectional focus</i>	<i>Sample/Sampling</i>	<i>Methods</i>	<i>Data analysis</i>
Ruiz Castro and Holvino (2016)	What 'markers' or 'indicators' of gender, class, and race-ethnicity do employees and managers construct as important through discourse, interactions and reported experience in a Big Four accounting firm in Mexico?	Gender, class, and race-ethnicity	37 managers and staff members (19 women and 18 men) from two core business areas (Auditing and Taxes) and two administrative areas (Business Development and Administration and Finance) in a Big Four accounting firm in Mexico. Participants were selected through a stratified random sampling method and recruited by invitation via a gatekeeper.	Organizational case study, semi-structured interviews, and documentation analysis	Grounded theory approach to thematic analysis. Micro-analytic readings of everyday practices
			Managers in the Human Resources Department. Data from an internal employee satisfaction survey.		
Showunmi et al. (2015)	How do intersecting ethnic and gender identities shape British white and minority ethnic women's constructions and enactment of leader identities? How do minority women make sense of their own leadership experiences?	Gender, ethnicity, religion, and class	Researcher fieldwork diary. 110 African, African-Caribbean, and South Asian women and 20 White women leaders recruited through the UK's Race for Opportunity (RfO) Champion Network using a maximum variation sampling technique.	Focus groups and interviews	Thematic analysis
Valentine et al. (2009)	How do young people negotiate and experience their identities in two different national contexts with differing integration policy frameworks? What are the unintended effects that integration policy can have on refugees' and asylum seekers' feelings of national belonging and identification?	Identity, belonging, and place	Young Somali refugee and asylum seekers (aged 11–18) living in Sheffield, UK and Aarhus, Denmark, representatives from local bodies dealing with asylum issues, various Somali education and community projects, and Somali community spaces (e.g. homework clubs).	Participant observation and in-depth interviews	Narrative analysis

Vardeman-Winter et al. (2013)	'How do publics perceive their intersecting identities create barriers to complying with new health guidelines? In what ways do publics perceive discrepancies between their needs for information about new health policies and the policymakers' agendas? How do publics perceive their intersecting identities are represented in mediated communication about new health guidelines?' (p. 394).	Gender and race	31 women from diverse racial backgrounds recruited via researchers' contacts and networks, and snowballing	Interviews and three focus groups	Narrative analysis and thematic analysis
Willis (2012)	What are the experiences and impact of young LGBQ people of witnessing homophobic discussions and exchanges in Australian workplaces?	Age and sexual orientation	34 young people (18–26 years) workers in Australia, recruited through 'advertisements circulated through electronic postings on LGBQ and youth-related websites, email notices circulated through youth health and welfare providers, and hard copy notices displayed in LGBQ social and community venues' (p. 1595).	Online interviews, face to face interviews, and a qualitative web-based questionnaire	Thematic analysis (open and theoretical coding)
Wright (2016)	What are the experiences of heterosexual women and lesbians of working in the male-dominated construction and transport industries in the UK? Can women derive support from interactions with male and female colleagues?	Gender, sexuality, and occupational class	38 women working in professional and non-professional occupations in the construction and transport industries in the UK. 16 women in construction trades. Key informant experts on the employment of women in non-traditionally female work. Participants were recruited 'through women's professional networks; trade union groups for women and lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) members; and employer-established staff networks' (p. 352).	Multi-group methodology. Semi-structured interviews, focus groups	Thematic coding analysis

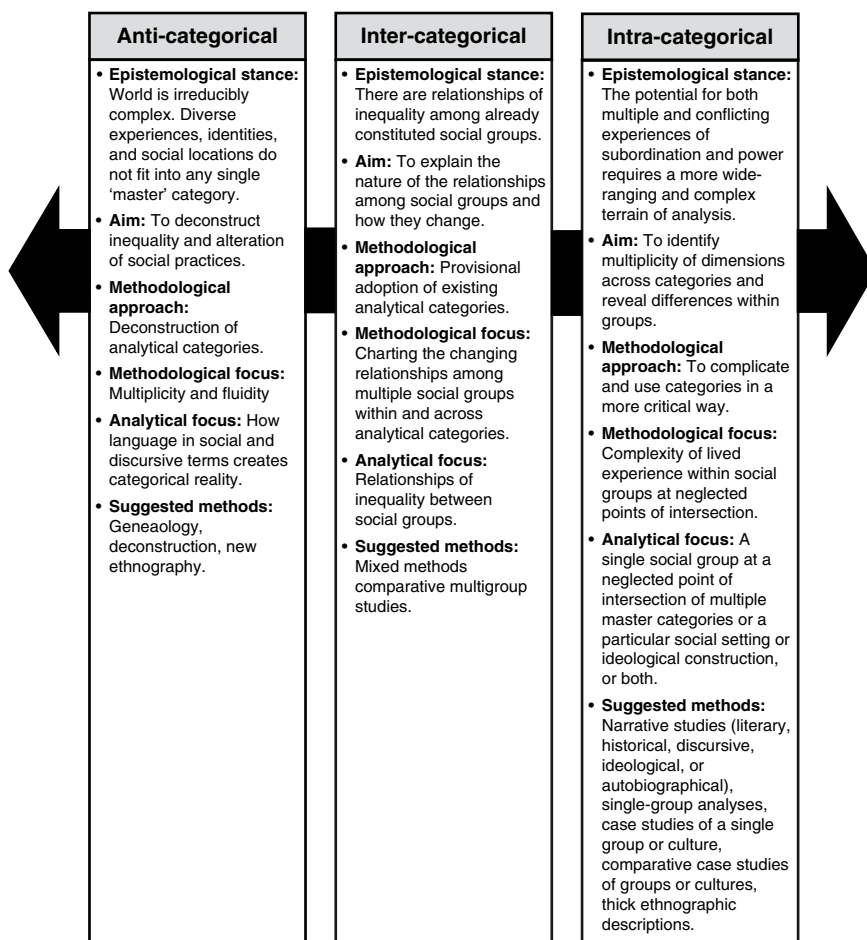


Figure 26.1 Categorical complexities

Adapted from: McCall, 2005

how to best capture the qualities attributed to the issues in study. The most influential framework dealing with the operationalization of categories is McCall's (2005). She identified three categorical complexities: anti-categorical, inter-categorical (or categorical) and intra-categorical. Figure 26.1 summarizes these approaches.

The previous discussions have addressed the key features of qualitative intersectional work. In the next section, I present considerations relevant to conducting intersectional research.

CONDUCTING QUALITATIVE INTERSECTIONAL RESEARCH: CONSIDERATIONS ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Conducting intersectional research is interesting and has much emancipatory potential for the lives, experiences, and circumstances of participants and researchers. However, it is also complex and frustrating. I have hinted already at the lack of a distinct intersectional methodology and this is perhaps the most pressing issue linked to conducting intersectional empirical

work (Nash, 2008). Reflecting on what I have discussed so far in this chapter, I will summarize the three key methodological issues linked to the use of intersectionality in qualitative research: research design, intersectional analysis and interpretation, and intersectional reflexivity.

Designing Qualitative Intersectional Research

At the design level, the scope of intersectional work should consider distinctions made between the study of interlocking oppressions and the study of intersectionality. This is a very fine distinction but one that is relevant insofar as ‘interlocking systems need one another, and in tracing the complex ways in which they help to secure one another, we learn how women are produced into positions that exist symbiotically but hierarchically’ (Razack, 1998: 13). This alludes to the lived experience and the way hegemonic systems construct individuals, which was not inherent to intersectionality in its original inception.

In thinking about what it means to conduct qualitative intersectional research, it is important to have clarity of what approach drives the research project in intersectional terms; for instance, are we adopting a subjectivity-centered approach and focusing on identities and subjectivities or are we adopting a systemic view and focusing on interlocking oppressions and how these operate within structures and institutions? The focus on differences in structural positions appears more useful to highlight how relations of power are embedded in processes, structures, and institutions, as opposed to a focus on subjectivities, which mainly highlights differences in identities (Collins, 1990; Dhamoon, 2011; Rodriguez et al., 2016). For example, in their exploration of intersections of gender, racioethnicity, and class in a professional service firm in Mexico, Ruiz Castro and Holvino (2016) framed their analysis situating their interview data in relation to the sociocultural features of the Mexican context. In practice,

this translated into looking at disadvantage not just as a result of categories of difference intersecting but also emerging from cultural scripts and the particular markers of inequality they produce.

Davis (2008) notes that intersectionality facilitates that distinct theoretical projects come together and collaborate in a mutually beneficial way. In that respect, perhaps the important considerations in relation to a research design stage are the particular assumptions under which intersectional empirical research operates. Hancock (2007b) alerts us to three central ones:

- 1 Examining complex political problems and processes requires a focus on more than one category of difference.

This in essence means that a study is intersectional when the aim is to reveal differences through the analysis of more than one category (Mooney, 2016). The choice of categories and how categorization is done to distinguish different forms of social differentiation is central to intersectional research (Christensen & Jensen, 2012), yet it is also contentious due to the challenge of identifying ‘what are the differences that make a difference?’ (Lewis, 2009: 207). Intersectionality analysis denaturalizes and politicizes categorical relations (Weldon, 2006), and while this is precisely one of its major strengths, this also comes with important questions about which categories to prioritize and how many categories to focus on. Winker and Degele (2011) have noted the challenge of realizing socially relevant categories of inequality methodically and comprehending them empirically.

There are two contrasting points: limited categories, which can lead to essentialism, and unlimited categories, which can lead to infinite regress (Ehrenreich, 2005; Rosenblum, 2009). Essentialism goes against the grain of intersectionality, yet in order to be able to manage analysis, researchers must reach a point where they are comfortable

enough to say ‘these categories are sufficient to explain instances of inequality’. This brings the issue of which categories are to be prioritized; what Ehrenreich (2005) terms the battle of oppressions and others (e.g. Martinez, n/d; Yuval-Davis, 2012) have discussed as the ‘Oppression Olympics’: the competition between groups for the ‘title of most oppressed’ (Martinez, 1993: 23) and the establishment of a hierarchy of competing oppressions in order to identify the most disadvantaged group. Being mindful of this, the selection of categories should be consistent with exploring the intersections of social categories or constructs that are relevant to the lived experiences of marginalized and privileged groups (either at the individual, organizational, or structural level).

- 2 Developing an integrative analysis of the interaction between individual and institutional levels of the research question.

This refers to what could be termed a multi-level approach and pertains to how categories are chosen and how they are positioned in analytical terms. Given the complexity of everyday experience and how both identities and positioning shift and change as part of the groups that individuals see themselves belonging to, groups that others classify individuals as being part of, as well as groups that individuals might strategically engage with, the notion that no categories are ever enough seems realistic. However, as Dean (2010) has noted, there is the risk of ‘a potential endless process of multiplying identity categories indefinitely’ (p. 119); the issue of infinite regress is also important at the level of analysis because particular identities can be subdivided into further distinctions, which leads to ‘an infinite loop of identities’ (Rosenblum, 2009: 40).

Hancock (2007b) notes that all categories matter equally and the relationship between them is an open empirical question. Similarly, each social division has a different ontological basis, which is irreducible to other social divisions (Anthias &

Yuval-Davis, 1983). In this respect, intersectionality lends itself to crafting precisely to allow capturing the diversity in processes, structures, and systems of privilege and oppression that operate not only in relational terms but also within institutional arrangements. For example, Collins (1990) proposes that intersections and their dynamics and consequences are better understood if the analytical focus is on how individuals experience and resist oppression at three levels: (a) the level of personal biography, (b) the group or community level of the cultural context created by race, class, and gender, and (c) the systemic level of social institutions. Similar multi-level approaches are proposed by Holvino’s (2010) simultaneity framework, and Choo and Ferree’s (2010) process-centered, group-centered and system-centered analyses.

- 3 Using multiple methods in order to place attention on both empirical and theoretical aspects of the research question.

The use of different methods has been advocated to embrace the multiplicity studied by intersectionality (McDowell, 2008). However, this is not a straightforward task; reflecting on her research practice, Jordan-Zachery (2007) poses the question of which methodology and methods would serve the purpose of ‘telling the story of a marginalized community’ (p. 257). Qualitative interviewing and narrative analysis appear to be preferred by researchers conducting intersectional work. B. A. Cole (2009) notes that ‘narrative [is useful to intersectionality work because it] can illuminate often hidden complexities while seeking to avoid simplistic generalizations and essentialisms’ (p. 563). For example, Bell and Nkomo (2001) conducted life history interviews to contrast the experiences of gender, race, and class of African-American and White women, and E. R. Cole (2008) used an archive of oral history interviews with feminist activists engaged in coalitional work, which she analyzed using

narrative analysis. Other examples include Willis's (2010) online interviews, face to face interviews, and a web-based qualitative questionnaire to explore how lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer deal with homophobic encounters in the workplace.

Nevertheless, despite the widespread use of interviews in intersectionality research, there are some methodological challenges in their use. Discussing their experience using in-depth interviews in the exploration of intersections of race, class, and gender, Cuádras and Uttal (1999: 157) identified three dilemmas. The *first* was how to address social structural issues if the sample did not include representatives from comparative categories. They linked this dilemma to who and how many people should be included in a study. Their recommendation is that sampling should not follow a prescribed approach but instead be emergent. The *second* was how to speak about race, class, and gender when respondents did not explicitly articulate these in their interviews. They linked this dilemma to the risk of over-interpretation, for example, using micro-sociological data to make macro-sociological claims. They concluded that even when individuals may not raise issues pertaining to specific categories, interrogation of the data could still be conducted to see how social categories may have shaped their accounts. The *third* was how to analyze multiple dimensions of individual biography and social structures simultaneously. They linked this dilemma to the location of individual accounts within a sociohistorical and socioeconomic context. They concluded that a way to address this was to consider temporality and shifts in narrative, asking themselves questions about what was invoked and by who, as well as venturing into possible explanations in identifiable differences.

Thinking about method, the coherence between method and sampling also needs consideration. Researching diversity requires attention to diversity at the level of sampling in order to capture the dynamics intersectionality sets out to explore. In her work

exploring the classed and gendered articulation of meanings of 'being lesbian' and the intersection of racism and heterosexism in the lives of black and minority ethnic gay men and women, Fish (2008) has highlighted the importance of using inclusive definitions in research design as well as different sampling methods to facilitate inclusion of diverse groups. Reflecting on her own research on the LGBT community, she notes that many Black and minority ethnic (BME) LGBT people may not use terms such as lesbian or gay to describe themselves, which might result in their exclusion from intersectional research that focuses on the experiences of this group. For example, Essers et al.'s (2010) study of Muslim immigrant business women in the Netherlands combined special interest organizations for entrepreneurs, women's immigrant networks, and snowballing to access participants. This allowed them the possibility of accessing a broader, more diverse sample base.

In some cases, a combination of methods (either qualitative or a combination of both qualitative and quantitative) has proven effective; for instance, Showunmi et al. (2015) combined focus groups and interviews to explore gender, class, and ethnicity in the leadership experiences of British women. There are also examples of multi-method approaches; in her analysis of legislative practices linked to racialized and gendered hierarchical structures to explain claims of marginalization of congresswomen of color, Hawkesworth (2003) combined textual analysis of interview data with a case study of welfare reform. Reflecting on the methodological challenges of investigating the processes of racing-gendering, she noted that '[it] requires methodological innovation to make visible that which traditional methodologies have rendered invisible' (p. 530). The benefits of multi-method approaches can be seen in the analytical richness they bring; for example, Munro (2001) explored class, gender, and race in trade unions combining interviews, questionnaires, surveys,

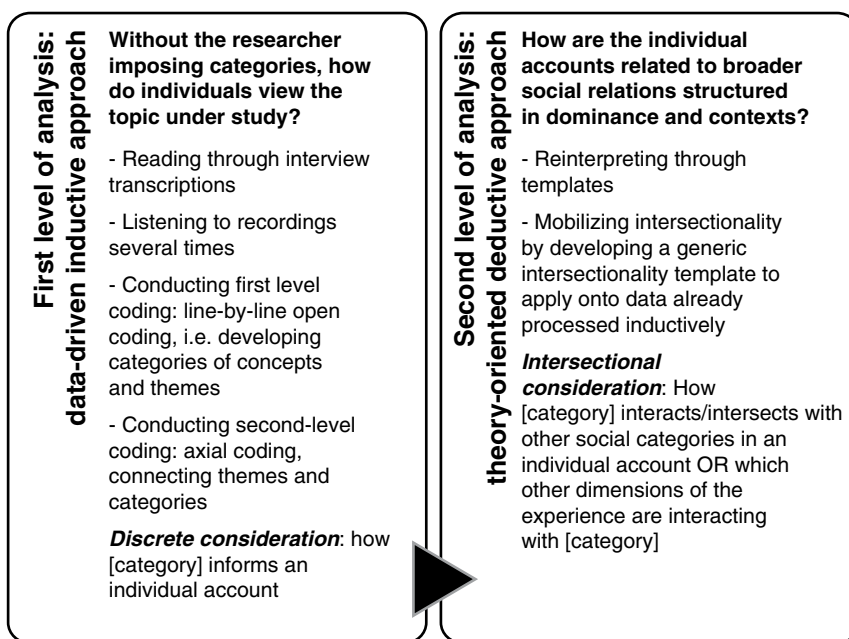


Figure 26.2 Two-step hybrid approach to analysis

Source: Bilge (2009: 5–7)

observations, and documentary material. This supported the presentation of a multi-level intersectional analysis that included the organizational, workplace, occupational, and individual levels. Conversely, Hankivsky and Grace (2015) have asserted that the use of mixed methods in their intersectional research on education and HIV allowed them to design their study in a way that was not explicit in published literature.

In addition, methodologies that facilitate deconstruction have also been used; for example, Jordan-Zachery (2007) noted that the use of discourse analysis allowed her ‘to challenge the “truth” as accepted by many concerning what it means to be a black woman’ (p. 260). Other works have proposed the use of existing frameworks to support intersectional work; for example, Campbell (2016) has used Dorothy Smith’s institutional ethnography to make visible relations of knowing between researchers and participants.

Similarly, Tatli and Özbilgin (2012) have proposed using Bourdieu’s theory of cultural, social, and symbolic forms of capital to develop an emic approach to intersectional analysis. They see Bourdieu’s theory as providing a useful way to position difference within an integrated historical, institutional, and socioeconomic analytical framework.

In analytical terms, ‘narrative production and analysis is a well-worn method for intersectionality scholars’ (Alexander-Floyd, 2012: 20), which is consistent with the role of narrative in the articulation of identity and identity positioning. Furthermore, given the interest in how categories of difference intersect to establish and reinforce social relations of power and domination, the use of thematic analysis and multi-level coding is prioritized. For example, Bilge (2009) developed an analytical strategy that she termed the ‘two-step hybrid approach’, which brought together intersectionality and inductive research

methodologies, and relied on combining inductive thematic analysis and a deductive template approach (Figure 26.2 presents a visual summary of this approach).

Following discussions in this section, Table 26.2 provides more details on examples of qualitative intersectional work mentioned in this section and elsewhere in this chapter. In the next section I expand on some of these issues by discussing intersectional analysis and interpretation.

Analyzing Intersectionally and Developing Insightful Intersectional Interpretations

Analysis and interpretation of data intersectionally is the most important aspect of intersectional work. As an epistemological framework, intersectionality allows for different conceptualizations to emerge in order to respond to different circumstances, so the focus should not be on sticking to categories but rather to focus on the interaction between them. Weldon (2006) has noted that intersectional scholars see single categories as meaningless if looked at apart from one another in isolation, because they do not have autonomous effects. This builds on the idea that social categories are not descriptive categories of identity applied to individuals but rather emerge as devices that foster group inequality (Collins, 1997). Therefore, a basic starting point in the analytical focus of intersectionality is on questions that ‘demonstrate the flaws of a race-only or gender-only approach’ (Hancock, 2007b: 250); this can be accomplished by researchers asking themselves questions to help them to reflect on the intersectional nature of experiences, structures, processes, and institutions associated with their data. Matsuda (1991) has proposed a method she terms ‘ask the other question’, which she sees as central to developing intersectional analysis to address the interconnection of all forms of subordination:

When I see something that looks racist, I ask, ‘Where is the patriarchy in this?’ When I see something that looks sexist, I ask, ‘Where is the heterosexism in this?’ When I see something that looks homophobic, I ask, ‘Where are the class interests in this?’ (p. 1189)

Similar efforts have been proposed by other scholars. For example, in her discussion of intersectionality in psychological research, E. R. Cole (2009: 171–176) proposes three questions that should guide intersectional analysis: (1) *Who is included within this category?*, (2) *What role does inequality play?*, and (3) *Where are there similarities?* The first question deals with the interdependency of categories. The second addresses the nuanced ways in which categories are positioned within hierarchies of power and privilege. The third focuses on commonalities across categories that might appear as very different. I would also include in this last question the commonalities found in experiences of being dominant or subordinate, which Tatum (2000) notes are found ‘even when the sources of dominance or subordination are different’ (p. 11).

In sum, it is essential to choose qualitative approaches that help to explore nuances in the lived experience and make visible the privilege and marginalization inherent to intersectional work. For example, the way racialized gender is experienced by a Black British female academic is different to how it is experienced by an African-American female academic (on account of different lived experiences, structural, cultural, institutional, and macro and micro societal level dynamics). As such, data analysis should consider processes of telling and articulating narratives that reveal axes of power and identity practices; this is, rather than thinking about gender and race, it is the notion of racialized gender what would allow alternative narratives to emerge (Holvino, 2010). Additionally, even when we ask questions to participants that aim to capture the intersectional nature of their experiences, this is in itself not a guarantee that participants themselves will invoke intersections in explicit ways.

This highlights the need for flexibility in order to capture emerging meanings and constructs. Narrative and discursive approaches are particularly suitable as they (a) are not fixed prescriptive approaches, (b) focus on bringing to light experiences and meaning-making of the lived experience, and (c) allow for the detailed attention to both what is explicit and implicit, hence facilitating exploring visible, not-so visible, and obscured intersections. Conversely, the prevalence in the use of thematic analysis signals how this flexibility can be achieved by qualitative researchers and is evident in particular works that have adopted this method (see Table 26.1). Bowleg (2008) warns about the risk of conducting superficial analyses and highlights the importance of appreciating the historical and structural dimensions of the social location of participants at the intersection of categories of difference. She argues that the interpretive task for intersectionality analysts is related to deriving meaning from the observed data and interpreting it 'within a larger sociohistorical context of structural inequality that may not be explicit or directly observable in the data' (p. 320) in order to avoid obscuring data that might be more implicit than explicit. In a similar vein, Hindman (2011) hints at flexibility that allows placing attention to under-acknowledged forms of marginalization beyond the usual categories of difference, for example how privilege is exercised within minority groups.

In terms of intersectional interpretation, Lykke (2010) has argued that it is possible for intersectional frameworks to change qualitative writing and this is a task that researchers should focus on. The development of insightful intersectional interpretations is about (a) identifying the dynamics of relationships (negative, positive, and neutral) and (b) using a distinct epistemic vocabulary. For example, Styhre and Eriksson-Zetterquist (2008) suggest that the epistemological fluidity of intersectionality requires that concepts such as multiple, multiplicity, assemblage, and the rhizome are embedded in intersectional

work. As an analytical strategy, intersectional frameworks provide new angles of vision on social institutions, practices, social problems, and other social phenomena associated with social inequality (Collins, 2015). It is therefore important for intersectional interpretations to be mindful of temporality because these institutions, practices, and problems shift over time, reframing dynamics and transforming inequalities. This means that in analytical terms, intersectionality challenges us to think about cumulative advantage. As Purkayastha (2013) has noted, in attempting to understand how prolonged experiences of marginalization shape people's experiences, we face the challenge of being able to capture the longitudinal effects of marginalization beyond a description of a particular point in time.

Being Intersectionally Reflexive

Collins (2000) has discussed the challenge of moving on from essentialized views of privilege and oppression, noting that 'while many of us have little difficulty assessing our own victimization within some major system of oppression [...] we typically fail to see how our thoughts and actions uphold someone else's subordination' (p. 475). She uses the examples of White feminists' claim of gender oppression without acknowledgement of their white-skin privilege and African-Americans' analyses of racism that view poor White women as symbols of white power to argue that different groups would always identify as fundamental their oppression and either overlook or classify others' as less important. This echoes similar discussions (e.g. Spelman, 1988; Burman, 2003) about essentialist feminist theories and the ways in which difference is enabled. For instance, Burman (2003) has noted that the way discussions of difference are approached normally operate 'in the name of helping or supporting "others", that is others less fortunately situated than "ourselves"' (p. 294).

Reflexivity refers to how the researcher constantly examines her/his actions and role

throughout the research process and scrutinizes them in the same way as the rest of the data (Mason, 1996: 6). This is linked to Haraway's (1988) notion of 'accountable positioning', whereby we acknowledge that social research has an inevitable attachment of subjects, subjectivities, emotions, and unexpected responses inherent to human nature that shape how knowledge is constructed and produced, and where both researchers and participants are active agents (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003; Browne & Nash, 2010).

Drawing on these ideas, the notion of intersectional reflexivity has been put forward (e.g. Jones, 2010; Jones & Calafell, 2012; Rodriguez & Ruiz Castro, 2014) to refer to the researcher's acknowledgment of their own intersecting identities, both marginalized and privileged, and the use of self-reflexivity to understand them. Jones (2010) has noted that

Reflexivity is uncomfortable because it forces you to acknowledge that you are complicit in the perpetuation of oppression [...] Reflexivity has got to hurt. Reflexivity is laborious. But while it may be laborious for me to 'go out of my way' to intervene in how I perform privilege, I must also recognize that it is a privilege to not have my performance always already marked as marginal. (p. 124)

In order to engage in intersectional reflexivity, researchers must ask themselves: 'How does who I am, who I have been, who I think I am, and how I feel' (Pillow, 2003: 175) affect the way in which I see, address, construct, interpret, and present research (Harding, 1986, 1991, 1997)? Using their fieldwork notes, Rodriguez and Ruiz Castro (2014) conducted an intersectional analysis of their research practice. Their analysis consisted of a reading of their fieldwork notes to (a) identify problematic moments where they identified dynamics of privilege and oppression during exchanges with participants, and (b) unpack what happened by discussing codes and dynamics of power; that is, which identity categories were invoked and to what effect. Their coding of fieldwork diaries focused on instances where social categories

of difference were invoked by themselves or by participants. Their conclusion points to the researcher self as a site of agentic intersectional multiplicity, where intersections are deployed strategically throughout the research process in order to navigate it.

Despite appearing similar to reflexivity, the aim of intersectional reflexivity goes beyond that of constant self-examination and looks to address the ways in which research practice could lead to intersectional subordination and disempowerment (Crenshaw, 1991). Given that intersectional research would focus on systems of inequality and unequal power relations that sustain them, the relationship between participant and researcher needs to be scrutinized with a view of challenging dynamics within the research process that might exacerbate the positioning of participants and the researcher within those systems and relations. Crenshaw (1988) notes that challenging hegemonic interests can only be done by those who identify with those dominant interests because 'people can only demand change in ways that reflect the logic of the institutions that they are challenging' (p. 1367). As such, the onus is mainly on researchers, who through their scholarship operate within hegemonic academic discourses, to challenge the dominant ideologies within research practice that generate or perpetuate intersectional subordination or disempowerment.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Intersectionality presents us with several complexities. On the one hand, it is difficult to operationalize and apply, yet remains a very attractive proposition due to how insightful and illustrative it can be. On the other, despite capturing categories and their significance, it remains largely provisional (Carastathis, 2014b) due to shifts and evolution over time and space. Still, as Collins (2015) has argued,

‘intersectional frameworks provide new angles of vision on social institutions, practices, social problems, and other social phenomena associated with social inequality’ (p. 3). They do this by calling our attention to the essentializing of differences (Jordan-Zachery, 2007) and promoting a closer attention to the multiplicity of local knowledges (Haraway, 1988). That in itself makes it a worthwhile endeavor.

As I struggle to make sense of intersectionality in my own qualitative research practice, something that keeps me going is reflection on intersectionality’s potential to be emancipatory. As a feminist scholar, this is at the forefront of my work. There are three distinct things intersectionality contributes to qualitative research:

- 1 It addresses the limitations of feminist and gender scholarship by providing an approach that recognizes and deals with the exclusion of individuals and groups who experience multiple marginalization.
- 2 It subverts binaries in social categories, instead supporting the theorization of identity in a more complex, fluid, and interconnected way.
- 3 It expands the exploration of situated knowledges and highlights how difference is (re)constructed within them.

While there is no clear-cut way to design and undertake intersectional research, the considerations laid out throughout this chapter are intended to help qualitative researchers to craft intersectional work. Intersectionality’s concern with the diversity of subjectivities makes it an important site for qualitative research. Through the use of qualitative methods, we can explore how categories of difference mutually create and are created as part of processes and structures within systems of power. This adds insight into and exposes differences in broad categories, e.g. ‘women’, ‘Blacks’ (Nash, 2008), which is essential to expand on the argument that the experience of difference is neither universal nor consistently circumscribed by gender (Nightingale, 2011: 155). At the same time, categories ‘cannot be tagged on to each other mechanically [because] they are

enmeshed in each other and the particular intersections involved produce specific effects’ (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1983: 62–63). Conversely, qualitative methods not only allow for the crafting finesse required to capture these dynamics, but also provide the space to explore the fluidity of differential situatedness (Yuval-Davis, 2011). This is linked to what Lewis (2009) has highlighted as problematic areas for feminist scholarship, namely ‘complex ontologies; the idiosyncrasies of experience; and multidimensional epistemologies’ (p. 203).

In terms of future directions, it is essential for intersectionality scholarship to expand its use of qualitative research methods to address some of its methodological criticisms. For example, Levine-Rasky (2011) has argued that intersectionality needs to expand to include more work that focuses on intersections of dominant identities (e.g. whiteness, economic privilege, masculinity). The underlying issue to this task is to articulate the meaning and fluidity of these categories and their intersections – as I have argued, this is at the core of qualitative research methods. In addition, the issues that matter to intersectional scholars, such as how knowledge, diversity, and equality operate in interconnected dialectic ways, and the role of particular positions and how they are linked to differential social, economic, and political power, require further insight. Thinking about the practical outcomes that intersectional work looks to achieve, for example, how non-hierarchical notions of difference are incorporated in understandings of disadvantage, discrimination, inequality, and oppression, and how these inform policies and actions toward equality, requires the kind of reflexive thinking that is particularly facilitated by qualitative methodologies.

There are specific areas of qualitative inquiry that provide the most potential for development of intersectional work: participatory action research, critical ethnography, visual methodologies, and longitudinal designs that adopt multi-level and cross-level analyses. The use of *participatory action research* is an ongoing area of development in

intersectionality work (e.g. Heiskanen et al., 2015) and its value lies in its direct link with the emancipatory aim of intersectionality by providing the opportunity for researchers and participants to collaboratively engage in the articulation of relevant categories of social difference. There is also much potential in the use of *critical ethnography* to unpack the situatedness of the lived experience, positioning oneself and taking one's place within the larger conversation alongside the voices of those with marginalized identities (Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2010). This would help in developing more critical self-reflection about our sociohistorical and cultural positioning, and how this impacts the way we engage with intersectionality in relation to our own difference and that of participants (e.g. Dei et al., 1997; Boylorn, 2014; Sibblis, 2014).

Visual methodologies would also offer the opportunity for researchers to enrich intersectional work, for example through the analysis of social media and visual displays (e.g. Bünz, 2012). The use of these methods would help to develop what we could term intersectional semiotics through the use of visual communication or a mix of modes of communication (multimodality) to explore, among other things, intersectional representations. Finally, it would be useful to develop more *longitudinal qualitative designs that adopt multi-level and cross-level analyses*. Longitudinal designs (e.g. Diamond & Butterworth, 2008) help to explore shifts in social identities and institutional and societal contexts as well as how these intersect and relate to interlocking systems of privilege and oppression over time and space, and across organizational boundaries and geographical borders. This is fundamental not only to understand the fluidity of intersectionality and its dynamics but also to explore the roles and interactions of multiple stakeholders within a setting or context.

I hope to have presented in this chapter a compelling case for the opportunities and potential that qualitative research methods have to align with the opportunity presented to us by intersectionality to address what

Haraway (1988: 580) has identified as a key problem in feminist scholarship: 'to translate knowledges among very different – and power-differentiated – communities [...] in order to build meanings and bodies that have a chance for life'. In qualitative research methods we find practical tools that we can use to situate, analyze, and interpret dynamics of intersectional disadvantage and inequality; those are the tools that can help us to dismantle the master's house.

Note

- 1 The failure of feminist theory to include race has been noted in the context of how Black women and women of color have historically been absent from dominant feminist discourses, and how white feminists' own racialized and classed positioning has prevented them from understanding the simultaneity of oppression experienced by Black women and women of color (Hurtado, 1989). Intersectionality could then be firmly positioned as a contribution from Black feminism, which is important to note because it explains why many foundational works allude to the experiences of Black women and women of color. It is important to clarify, however, that this does not mean that intersectionality should only be used to study these groups: we all lead intersectional lives!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the important contribution of participants at the conference 'Interrogating Intersectionality: What's missing and what's next' (Simmons College, Boston, USA, 29 June–1st July 2013) and at the symposium 'Practices of Intersectionality' (Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands, 27 March 2014) whose insightful discussions helped me to shape the ideas discussed in this chapter. I would also like to thank Stephen Procter for his close reading and valuable feedback, which helped me to improve the ideas presented in this chapter, and Gina Grandy and an anonymous reviewer for their editorial comments on earlier versions of the chapter.

REFERENCES

- Acker, J. (2012) Gendered organizations and intersectionality: Problems and possibilities. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 31(3): 214–224.
- Adamson, M., & Johansson, M. (2016) Compositions of professionalism in counselling work: An embodied and embedded intersectionality framework. *Human Relations*, DOI: 0018726716639118.
- Adib, A., & Guerrier, Y. (2003) The interlocking of gender with nationality, race, ethnicity and class: The narratives of women in hotel work. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 10(4): 413–432.
- Alexander-Floyd, N. G. (2012) Disappearing acts: Reclaiming intersectionality in the social sciences in a post-black feminist era. *Feminist Formations*, 24(1): 1–25.
- Amrute, S. (2016) *Encoding race, encoding class: Indian IT workers in Berlin*. London: Duke University Press.
- Andersen, M., & Collins, P. H. (2015) Why race, class, and gender still matter. In M. Andersen and P. H. Collins (Eds) *Race, class, and gender: An anthology*, 9th edn. Boston: Cengage Learning, pp. 1–14.
- Anthias, F. (2005) Social stratification and social inequality: Models of intersectionality and identity. In F. Devine, M. Savage, J. Scott and R. Crompton (Eds) *Rethinking class: Culture, identities and lifestyle*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 24–45.
- Anthias, F., & Yuval-Davis, N. (1983) Contextualizing feminism: Gender, ethnic and class divisions. *Feminist Review*, 15: 62–75.
- Atewologun, D., Sealy, R., & Vinnicombe, S. (2016) Revealing intersectional dynamics in organizations: Introducing 'intersectional identity work'. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 23(3): 223–246.
- Barnum, A. J., & Zajicek, A. M. (2008) An intersectional analysis of visual media: A case of diesel advertisements. *Social Thought & Research*, 29: 105–128.
- Bell, E. L. J. E., & Nkomo, S. M. (2001) *Our separate ways: Black and white women and the struggle for professional identity*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Bilge, S. (2009) *Smuggling intersectionality into the study of masculinity: Some methodological challenges*. Paper presented at *Feminist Research Methods: An International Conference*, University of Stockholm, 4–9 February.
- Block, D., & Corona, V. (2014) Exploring class-based intersectionality. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 27(1): 27–42.
- Boogaard, B., & Roggeband, C. (2010) Paradoxes of intersectionality: Theorizing inequality in the Dutch police force through structure and agency. *Organization*, 17(1): 53–75.
- Borchorst, A., & Teigen, M. (2010) Political intersectionality: Tackling inequalities in public policies in Scandinavia. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*, 19(2–3): 19–28.
- Bowleg, L. (2008) When Black + Lesbian + Woman ≠ Black Lesbian Woman: The methodological challenges of qualitative and quantitative research. *Sex Roles*, 59(5–6): 312–325.
- Boyle, E., & Brayton, S. (2012) Ageing masculinities and “muscle work” in Hollywood action film: An analysis of *The Expendables*. *Men and Masculinities*, 15(5): 468–485.
- Boylorn, R. M. (2014) A story & a stereotype: An angry and strong auto/ethnography of race, class and gender. In R. M. Boylorn and M. P. Orbe (Eds) *Critical autoethnography: Intersecting cultural identities in everyday life*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, pp. 129–143.
- Browne, K., & Nash, C. J. (2010) Queer methods and methodologies: An introduction. In K. Browne and C. J. Nash (Eds) *Queer methods and methodologies: Intersecting queer theories and social science research*. Farnham: Ashgate, pp. 1–24.
- Bünz, A. (2012) Is it enough to make the main characters female? An intersectional and social semiotic reading of the exhibition *Prehistories 1* at the National Historical Museum in Stockholm, Sweden. In I.-M. Back Danielsson and S. Thedéen (Eds) *To tender gender: The pasts and futures of gender research in archaeology*. Stockholm: Stockholm University, pp. 97–116.
- Burman, E. (2003) From difference to intersectionality: Challenges and resources. *The European Journal of Psychotherapy*, 6(4): 292–308.
- Butz, K. (2008) Rereading American hardcore: Intersectional privilege and the lyrics of early Californian hardcore punk. *aspeers*, 1, 131–158. Available at: www.aspeers.com/2008/butz?fulltext (Accessed 18/07/16).

- Campbell, M. (2016) Intersectionality, policy-oriented research and the social relations of knowing. *Gender, Work & Organization*, DOI: 10.1111/gwao.12083.
- Carastathis, A. (2014a) The concept of intersectionality in feminist theory. *Philosophy Compass*, 9(5): 304–314.
- Carastathis, A. (2014b) Reinvigorating intersectionality as a provisional concept. In N. Goswami, M. M. O'Donovan and L. Yount (Eds) *Why race and gender still matter: An intersectional approach*. Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, pp. 59–70.
- Chapman, M. (2015) Feminist dilemmas and the agency of veiled Muslim women: Analyzing identities and social representations. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 23(3): 237–250.
- Choo, H. Y., & Ferree, M. M. (2010). Practicing intersectionality in sociological research: A critical analysis of inclusions, interactions, and institutions in the study of inequalities. *Sociological Theory*, 28(2): 129–149.
- Christensen, A. D., & Jensen, S. Q. (2012) Doing intersectional analysis: Methodological implications for qualitative research. *NORA-Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*, 20(2): 109–125.
- Cole, B. A. (2009) Gender, narratives and intersectionality: Can personal experience approaches to research contribute to 'undoing gender'? *International Review of Education*, 55(5–6): 561–578.
- Cole, E. R. (2008) Coalitions as a model for intersectionality: From practice to theory. *Sex Roles*, 59(5–6): 443–453.
- Cole, E. R. (2009) Intersectionality and research in psychology. *American Psychologist*, 64(3): 170–180.
- Collins, P. H. (1990) *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Collins, P. H. (1997) Comment on Hekman's 'Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited': Where's the power? *Signs*, 22(2): 375–381.
- Collins, P. H. (2000) Toward a new vision: Race, class, and gender as categories of analysis and connection. In M. Adams, W. J. Blumenfeld, R. Castañeda, H. W. Hackman, M. L. Peters and X. Zúñiga (Eds) *Readings for diversity and social justice: An anthology on racism, anti-semitism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, and classism*. London: Routledge, pp. 457–462.
- Collins, P. H. (2001) *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness and the politics of empowerment*. London: Routledge.
- Collins, P. H. (2015) Intersectionality's definitional dilemmas. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 41: 1–20.
- Crenshaw, K. W. (1988) Race, reform, and retrenchment: Transformation and legitimation in antidiscrimination law. *Harvard Law Review*, 101(7): 1331–1387.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989) Demarginalising the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1): 139–167.
- Crenshaw, K. (1991) Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of colour. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6): 1241–1299.
- Crenshaw, K. W. (1997) Beyond racism and misogyny: Black feminism and 2 Live Crew. In D. T. Meyers (Ed.) *Feminist social thought: A reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 245–263.
- Cruells López, M., & Ruiz García, S. (2014) Political intersectionality within the Spanish *indignados* social movement. In L. M. Woehrle (Ed.) *Intersectionality and social change. (Research in social movements, conflicts and change, Volume 3)*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited, pp. 3–25.
- Cuádriz, G. H., & Uttal, L. (1999) Intersectionality and in-depth interviews: Methodological strategies for analyzing race, class, and gender. *Race, Gender & Class*, 6(3): 156–186.
- Cunliffe, A. L. (2011) Crafting qualitative research: Morgan and Smircich 30 years on. *Organizational Research Methods*, 14(4): 647–673.
- Davis, K. (2008) Intersectionality as buzzword: A sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory successful. *Feminist Theory*, 9(1): 67–85.
- Dean, J. J. (2010) Thinking intersectionality: Sexualities and the politics of multiple identities. In Y. Taylor, S. Hines and M. E. Casey (Eds) *Theorizing intersectionality and sexuality*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, pp. 119–139.
- Dei, G. J. S., Mazzuca, J., McIsaac, E., & Zine, J. (1997) *Reconstructing 'dropout': A critical*

- ethnography of the dynamics of Black students' disengagement from school*. London: University of Toronto Press.
- Dhamoon, R. K. (2011) Considerations on mainstreaming intersectionality. *Political Research Quarterly*, 64(1): 230–243.
- Diamond, L. M., & Butterworth, M. (2008) Questioning gender and sexual identity: Dynamic links over time. *Sex Roles*, 59(5–6): 365–376.
- Dottolo, A. L., & Stewart, A. J. (2008) 'Don't ever forget now, you're a Black man in America': Intersections of race, class and gender in encounters with the police. *Sex Roles*, 59(5–6): 350–364.
- Ehrenreich, N. (2002). Subordination and symbiosis: Mechanisms of mutual support between subordinating systems. *UMKC Law Review*, 71(2): 251–324.
- Essers, C., Benschop, Y., & Doorewaard, H. (2010) Female ethnicity: Understanding Muslim immigrant businesswomen in the Netherlands. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 17(3): 320–339.
- Essers, C., & Tedmanson, D. (2014) Upsetting 'others' in the Netherlands: Narratives of Muslim Turkish migrant businesswomen at the crossroads of ethnicity, gender and religion. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 21(4): 353–367.
- Few, A. L. (2007) Racialized gender. In G. Ritzer (Ed.) *Blackwell encyclopedia of sociology*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Fish, J. (2008) Navigating queer street: Researching the intersections of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) identities in health research. *Sociological Research Online* 13(1)12. Available at: www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/12.html (Accessed 18/07/16).
- Geerts, E., & Van der Tuin, I. (2013) From intersectionality to interference: Feminist onto-epistemological reflections on the politics of representation. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 41(3): 171–178.
- Gill, R. (2009) Beyond the 'sexualization of culture' thesis: An intersectional analysis of 'sixpacks', 'midriiffs' and 'hot lesbians' in advertising. *Sexualities*, 12(2): 137–160.
- Grillo, T. (2013) Anti-essentialism and intersectionality: Tools to dismantle the master's house. *Berkeley Journal of Gender, Law & Justice*, 10(1): 16–30.
- Halrynjo, S., & Jonker, M. (2016) Naming and framing of intersectionality in hijab cases – Does it matter? An analysis of discrimination cases in Scandinavia and the Netherlands. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 23(3): 278–295.
- Hancock, A.-M. (2007a) When multiplication doesn't equal quick addition: Examining intersectionality as a research paradigm. *Perspectives on Politics*, 5(1): 63–78.
- Hancock, A.-M. (2007b) Intersectionality as a normative and empirical paradigm. *Politics & Gender*, 3(2): 248–254.
- Hancock, A.-M. (2013) Empirical intersectionality: A tale of two approaches. *UC Irvine Law Review*, 3(2): 259–296.
- Hankivsky, O., & Grace, D. (2015) Understanding and emphasizing difference and intersectionality in multimethod and mixed methods research. In S. N. Hesse-Biber and R. R. Johnson (Eds) *The Oxford handbook of multi-method and mixed methods research inquiry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 110–127.
- Haraway, D. (1988) Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3): 575–599.
- Harding, S. (1986) The instability of the analytical categories of feminist theory. *Signs*, 11(4): 645–664.
- Harding, S. G. (1991) *Whose science? Whose knowledge? Thinking from women's lives*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Harding, S. (1997) Is modern science an ethno-science? Rethinking epistemological assumptions. In T. Shinn, J. Spaapen and V. Krishna (Eds) *Science and technology in a developing world*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, pp. 37–64.
- Hawkesworth, M. (2003) Congressional enactments of race–gender: Toward a theory of raced–gendered institutions. *American Political Science Review*, 97(4): 529–549.
- Healy, G., Bradley, H., & Forson, C. (2011) Intersectional sensibilities in analysing inequality regimes in public sector organizations. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 18(5): 467–487.
- Heiskanen, T., Otonkorpi-Lehtoranta, K., Leinonen, M., & Ylöstalo, H. (2015) Gender issues on change agenda – practicing intersectionality in action research. *Gender, Work & Organization*, DOI: 10.1111/gwao.12072.

- Hillsburg, H. (2013) Towards a methodology of intersectionality: An axiom-based approach. *Atlantis*, 36(1): 3–11.
- Hindman, M. D. (2011) Rethinking intersectionality: Towards an understanding of discursive marginalization. *New Political Science*, 33(2): 189–210.
- Holland, D., Lachicotte, W. Jr., Skinner, D., & Cain, C. (1998) *Identity and agency in cultural worlds*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Holtzman, L., & Sharpe, L. (2014) *Media messages: What film, television, and popular music teach us about race, class, gender, and sexual orientation*. London: Routledge.
- Holvino, E. (2010) Intersections: The simultaneity of race, gender and class in organization studies. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 17(3): 248–277.
- Hurtado, A. (1989) Relating to privilege: Seduction and rejection in the subordination of white women and women of colour. *Signs*, 14(4): 833–855.
- Johansson, M., & Śliwa, M. (2014) Gender, foreignness and academia: An intersectional analysis of the experiences of foreign women academics in UK business schools. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 21(1): 18–36.
- Johansson, M., & Śliwa, M. (2016) 'It is English and there is no alternative': Intersectionality, language and social/organizational differentiation of Polish migrants in the UK. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 23(3): 296–309.
- Jones, R. G. (2010) Putting privilege into practice through 'intersectional reflexivity': Ruminations, interventions, and possibilities. *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping*, 16(1): 122–125.
- Jones Jr, R. G., & Calafell, B. M. (2012) Contesting neoliberalism through critical pedagogy, intersectional reflexivity, and personal narrative: Queer tales of academia. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 59(7): 957–981.
- Jordan-Zachery, J. S. (2007) Am I a black woman or a woman who is black? A few thoughts on the meaning of intersectionality. *Politics & Gender*, 3(2): 254–263.
- Jordan-Zachery, J. (2013) Now you see me, now you don't: My political fight against the invisibility/erasure of Black women in intersectionality research. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 1(1): 101–109.
- Ko, L. T., Kachchaf, R. R., Ong, M., & Hodari, A. K. (2013) Narratives of the double bind: Intersectionality in life stories of women of color in physics, astrophysics and astronomy. *American Institute of Physics Conference Proceedings*, 1513(1): 222–225.
- Kvasny, L., Trauth, E. M., & Morgan, A. J. (2009) Power relations in IT education and work: The intersectionality of gender, race, and class. *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society*, 7(2–3): 96–118.
- Levine-Rasky, C. (2011) Intersectionality theory applied to whiteness and middle-classness. *Social Identities*, 17(2): 239–253.
- Lewis, G. (2009) Celebrating intersectionality? Debates on a multi-faceted concept in gender studies: Themes from a conference. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 16(3): 203–210.
- Lloyd-Jones, B. (2009) Implications of race and gender in higher education administration: An African American woman's perspective. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 11(5): 606–618.
- Logie, C. H., James, L., Tharao, W., & Loutfy, M. R. (2011) HIV, gender, race, sexual orientation, and sex work: A qualitative study of intersectional stigma experienced by HIV-positive women in Ontario, Canada. *PLoS Med*, 8(11): e1001124. Available at: <http://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article/asset?id=10.1371%2Fjournal.pmed.1001124.PDF> (Accessed 18/07/16).
- Lombardo, E., & Agustín, L. R. (2012) Framing gender intersections in the European Union: What implications for the quality of intersectionality in policies? *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 19(4): 482–512.
- Lombardo, E., & Verloo, M. (2009a) Stretching gender equality to other inequalities: Political intersectionality in European gender equality policies. In E. Lombardo, P. Meier and M. M. T. Verloo (Eds) *The discursive politics of gender equality stretching, bending and policymaking*. London: Routledge, pp. 68–85.
- Lombardo, E., & Verloo, M. (2009b) Institutionalizing intersectionality in the European Union? Policy developments and contestations. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 11(4): 478–495.

- Love, C. D., Booyesen, L. A., & Essed, P. (2015) An exploration of the intersection of race, gender and generation in African American women doing social justice work. *Gender, Work & Organization*, DOI: 10.1111/gwao.12095.
- Lykke, N. (2010) *Feminist studies: A guide to intersectional theory, methodology and writing*. London: Routledge.
- Martinez, E. (1993) Beyond black/white: The racisms of our time. *Social Justice*, 20(1–2): 22–34.
- Martinez, E. (n/d) Seeing more than black & white (Latinos, racism, and the cultural divides). Available at: www.indigenouspeople.net/blackwhit.htm (Accessed 18/02/16).
- Mason, J. (1996) *Qualitative researching*. London: Sage.
- Matsuda, M. J. (1991) Beside my sister, facing the enemy: Legal theory out of coalition. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6): 1183–1192.
- Mauthner, N. S., & Doucet, A. (2003) Reflexive accounts and accounts of reflexivity in qualitative data analysis. *Sociology*, 37(3): 413–431.
- Mavin, S., Bryans, P., & Cunningham, R. (2010) Fed-up with Blair's babes, Gordon's gals, Cameron's cuties, Nick's nymphets: Challenging gendered media representations of women political leaders. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 25(7): 550–569.
- McCall, L. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 30(3): 1771–1800.
- McDowell, L. (2008) Thinking through work: Complex inequalities, constructions of difference and trans-national migrants. *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(4): 491–507.
- Mooney, S. (2016) 'Nimble' intersectionality in employment research: A way to resolve methodological dilemmas. *Work, Employment & Society*, DOI: 0950017015620768.
- Moorosi, P. (2013) Constructing a leader's identity through a leadership development programme: An intersectional analysis. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 42(6): 792–807.
- Munro, A. (2001) A feminist trade union agenda? The continued significance of class, gender and race. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 8(4): 454–471.
- Narváez, R. F., Meyer, I. H., Kertzner, R. M., Ouellette, S. C., & Gordon, A. R. (2009) A qualitative approach to the intersection of sexual, ethnic, and gender identities. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, 9(1): 63–86.
- Nash, J. C. (2008) Re-thinking intersectionality. *Feminist Review*, 89(1): 1–15.
- Nightingale, A. J. (2011) Bounding difference: Intersectionality and the material production of gender, caste, class and environment in Nepal. *Geoforum*, 42(2): 153–162.
- Nishida, A. (2016) Understanding political development through an intersectionality framework: Life stories of disability activists. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 36(2). Available at: <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/4449/4302> (Accessed 30/07/16).
- Okereke, K. (2014) Words: Bloc Party's Kele Okereke on being gay and black in the dance and rock worlds. THUMP, 11 September. Available at: https://thump.vice.com/en_uk/article/bloc-partys-kele-okereke-on-being-gay-and-black-in-the-dance-and-rock-worlds (Accessed 18/07/16).
- Peña Ovalle, P. (2011) *Dance and the Hollywood Latina: Race, sex, and stardom*. London: Rutgers University Press.
- Phoenix, A. (2006) Interrogating intersectionality: Productive ways of theorizing multiple positioning. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*, 23. Available at: <https://tidsskrift.dk/index.php/KKF/article/view/53110/97750> (Accessed 18/02/16).
- Pillow, W. (2003) Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(2): 175–196.
- Prins, B. (2006) Narrative accounts of origins: A blind spot in the intersectional approach? *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 13(3): 277–290.
- Purkayastha, B. (2013) *Intersectionality: Provocations and challenges*. Keynote delivered at the conference: *Interrogating Intersectionality: What's missing and what's next*, Centre for Gender in Organizations, Simmons College, Boston (USA), 29–30 June.
- Razack, S. H. (1998) *Looking white people in the eye: Gender, race, and culture in courtrooms and classrooms*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Ringrose, J. (2007) Troubling agency and 'choice': A psychosocial analysis of students'

- negotiations of Black Feminist 'intersectionality' discourses in Women's Studies. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 30(3): 264–278.
- Rodriguez, J. K., Holvino, E., Fletcher, J. K., & Nkomo, S. E. (2016) The theory and praxis of intersectionality in work and organizations: Where do we go from here? *Gender, Work & Organization*, 23(3): 201–222.
- Rodriguez, J. K., & Ruiz Castro, M. (2014) *Intersectional reflexivity in organizational research*. Paper presented at the Gender, Work & Organization 8th Biennial International Interdisciplinary Conference, Keele University, UK, 25 June.
- Ropers-Huilman, R., & Winters, K. T. (2010) Imagining intersectionality and the spaces in between: Theories and processes of socially transformative knowing. In M. Savin-Baden and C. H. Major (Eds) *New approaches to qualitative research: Wisdom and uncertainty*. London: Routledge, pp. 37–48.
- Rosenblum, D. (2009) Queer legal victories: Intersectionality revisited. In S. Barclay, M. Bernstein and A.-M. Marshall (Eds) *Queer mobilizations: LGBT activists confront the law*. New York: New York University Press, pp. 38–51.
- Roth, J. (2013) Entangled inequalities as intersectionalities: Towards an epistemic sensibilization. *desigualdades.net* Working Paper Series, 43. Berlin: *desigualdades.net*: Research Network on Interdependent Inequalities in Latin America.
- Ruiz Castro, M., & Holvino, E. (2016) Applying intersectionality in organizations: Inequality markers, cultural scripts and advancement practices in a professional service firm. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 23(3): 328–347.
- Shields, S. A. (2008) Gender: An intersectional perspective. *Sex Roles*, 59(5–6): 301–311.
- Showunmi, V., Atewologun, D., & Bebbington, D. (2015) Ethnic, gender and class intersections in British women's leadership experiences. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, DOI: 1741143215587308.
- Sibblis, C. (2014) Progressive discipline, regressive education: The systematic exclusion of black youth in and through expulsion programmes. In G. J. S. Dei and M. McDermott (Eds) *Politics of anti-racism education: In search of strategies for transformative learning*. London: Springer, pp. 43–58.
- Simpson, A. Y. (2007) Going it alone: Black women activists and Black organizational quiescence. In W. C. Rich (Ed.) *African American perspectives on political science*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, pp. 151–168.
- Spelman, E. (1988) *Inessential woman: Problems of exclusion in feminist thought*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Styhre, A., & Eriksson-Zetterquist, U. (2008) Thinking the multiple in gender and diversity studies: Examining the concept of intersectionality. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 23(8): 567–582.
- Tatli, A., & Özbilgin, M. (2012) An emic approach to intersectional study of diversity at work: A Bourdieuan framing. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 14(2): 180–200.
- Tatum, B. D. (2000) The complexity of identity: Who am I? Who are my people? In M. Adams, W. J. Blumenfeld, R. Castaneda, H. W. Hackman, M. L. Peters and X. Zúñiga (Eds) *Readings for diversity and social justice: An anthology on racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, and classism*. London: Routledge, pp. 9–14.
- Valentine, G., Sporton, D., & Nielsen, K. B. (2009) Identities and belonging: A study of Somali refugee and asylum seekers living in the UK and Denmark. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 27(2): 234–250.
- Vardeman-Winter, J., Jiang, H., & Tindall, N. T. (2013) Information-seeking outcomes of representational, structural, and political intersectionality among health media consumers. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 41(4): 389–411.
- Verloo, M. (2006) Multiple inequalities, intersectionality and the European Union. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 13(3): 211–228.
- Verloo, M. (2013) Intersectional and cross-movement politics and policies: Reflections on current practices and debates. *Signs*, 38(4): 893–915.
- Verloo, M., & Lombardo, E. (2007) Contested gender equality and policy variety in Europe: Introducing a critical frame analysis approach. In M. Verloo (Ed.) *Multiple meanings of gender equality: A critical frame analysis of gender policies in Europe*. Budapest: Central European University Press, pp. 21–49.

- Weldon, S. L. (2006) The structure of intersectionality: A comparative politics of gender. *Politics & Gender*, 2(2): 235–248.
- Willis, P. (2012) Witnesses on the periphery: Young lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer employees witnessing homophobic exchanges in Australian workplaces. *Human Relations*, 65(12): 1589–1610.
- Winker, G., & Degele, N. (2011) Intersectionality as multi-level analysis: Dealing with social inequality. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 18(1): 51–66.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2006) Intersectionality and feminist politics. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 13(3): 193–209.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2011) *The politics of belonging: Intersectional contestations*. London: Sage.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2012) Dialogical epistemology – An intersectional resistance to the 'oppression Olympics'. *Gender & Society*, 26(1): 46–54.

PART IV

Challenges



This page intentionally left blank

Access and Departure

Chris Land and Scott Taylor

INTRODUCTION

At one stage whilst writing this chapter we began negotiating organizational access to collect data. We had funding in place. We had what we thought were some interesting research questions and ideas. We clearly articulated our intentions to a series of gatekeepers, promising not to disrupt the work being done within the organization. We provided assurances that we would discuss our analysis with respondents when complete. We like to think we are relatively skilled at gaining access to do research. And, of course, we really wanted to do the research.

And our series of requests was rejected. In one case we were unable even to speak to organizational gatekeepers directly and were rebuffed by an external public relations company that handled all requests for access to the company founder. This left us with several options: keep going by asking for access elsewhere at other, perhaps less intrinsically interesting (Stake, 2005) organizations;

return the research funding and abandon the research; find data ‘outside’ the organizations that would allow us to develop our ideas; or adopt covert methods and try to enter the organizations by, for example, applying for a job there.

Each of these possibilities exemplifies the continuous opportunities to reconsider or give up that are produced by negotiating access if it is approached as an iterative, non-linear, dynamic process (Peticca-Harris et al., 2016). Our frustration at this recent experience, combined with our reading of recently published accounts of access negotiation, brought us back to our ongoing attempts to understand the processes of entering and leaving the organizations that we try to collect data in or from. Previously, we have written about the political and ethical constraints placed on research when we make promises of individual and organizational anonymity during access negotiations (Taylor & Land, 2014). There we argued that blanket promises of anonymity, whilst conforming to institutionalized

procedures for ethical research practice, may in fact create barriers to engaged research and the realization of our wider moral obligations as academics, specifically our responsibility to inform and contribute to social and political debate. This chapter builds on that argument to unpack the common conception of access as a time-bounded, instrumental activity. Here, we look in more detail at how, why and to what ends researchers seek access, and finally consider how research can continue in the absence of access, or at least in the absence of 'access' as it is conventionally understood: formally agreed permission, granted by organizational gatekeepers, to openly collect data. As we do this, we review both historical and contemporary contributions to understanding access and emphasize the temporally situated nature of what constitutes ethical practice in negotiating access.

We are keen to include a discussion of how to research without access in this chapter because failing to gain access is always a risk with social research and, we would argue, an increasing one in certain areas (such as slow qualitative research or politicized critical management research). Our own experience, and the experiences of others, suggests that researchers are being confronted with more barriers to access, and therefore more challenges to collecting the kind of data that have formed the basis of many qualitative studies of management and organization. There are, we think, multiple facets to this. First, there are simply more people working in the field of management and organization studies who are requesting access to organizations – more established researchers, more doctoral researchers, and more undergraduate and masters' students seeking access to organizations for their dissertation research. This is not a new dynamic. Established academics were complaining about relatively large numbers of post-graduate students making access more difficult in the 1980s (Buchanan et al., 1988, p. 55) and student numbers have grown significantly since then. Second, as we have argued (Land & Taylor, 2010), some of the

most interesting organizations that researchers seek access to have the most compelling reasons to deny entry to collect data. Companies with a value proposition based on their brand, or on a high-profile reputation for organizing ethically, for example, find reasons to deny access because of the very activity that makes them interesting to us, even when individual and corporate anonymity are promised. For example, one organization we unsuccessfully tried to access recently has based much of its branding activity on organizational self-representation as a radical, anarchistic upstart in an industry dominated by large conglomerates. Whereas multi-national corporations in the industry are regularly challenged in the media for their ethically problematic products and marketing campaigns, the implicit, and often explicit, value claim is that the company we wanted to research is more ethical, more authentic and less exploitative. As marketers in the company regularly mobilize a language of democratic, counter-cultural organizational and alternative managerial practices, our suspicion is that their reluctance to being researched was founded on a concern to control media representation and public discussions of their company and organizational practices.

Third, and perhaps paradoxically, we observe an increasing amount of publicly available information surrounding organizations, mostly as a result of the Internet's facilitation of self-publication and social media activity through means such as Facebook and Twitter. This makes it easier, as we argue below, for access to be denied for two linked reasons: first, when gatekeepers tell us we can already find online what we need to know to write about the organization, implying that nothing is hidden; and second, because gatekeepers equate researchers with those who write critically or negatively about organizations online. Again, this is not exactly new. Almost 40 years ago, in one of the most cited pieces written on organizational access, Buchanan et al. (1988) advised researchers not to mention 'interviews' or

‘publication’ when approaching organizations. For the managers they negotiated with, such words conjured up images of exposés in newspapers, something quite removed from the realities of academic research and publishing. Instead, they chose to ‘tell potential respondents that we want to learn from their experience by talking to them and that we will write an account of our work, which they will see’ (Buchanan et al., 1988, p. 57). For the increasing number of brand-based organizations in which social reputation is crucial, the potential risks are even greater today, suggesting that access to that part of the economy is increasingly difficult.

As described above, at one stage in our current research project we found ourselves in the position of having no access whatsoever ‘inside organizations’. A complete lack of access presents, we think, significant problems for the conduct of meaningful social research that aims to represent the experience of work and to analytically locate that experience in relation to wider political, economic, social and cultural changes. We can, of course, decide to ‘give up and move on’ (Peticca-Harris et al., 2016), as we and many others have on various projects, leaving an incomplete piece of work to gather dust on a shelf or gradually go out-of-date on a hard drive. However, we think there are more creative ways to deal with denial of physical access to organizational space, approaches that researchers have perhaps been too quick to dismiss. These alternatives can certainly involve time-consuming engagement with institutional research ethics committees and frameworks. These internal institutional-professional gatekeepers may prevent researchers from even leaving campus and result in a different, perhaps even more frustrating, form of access denial. Notwithstanding, if social research in management and organization studies is to continue in the varied forms that it has taken, then it is incumbent on researchers to continue to be creative in thinking through *how* we gain access, *why* we want access and *what* it is that

we want to access. To do this, we argue that it might be useful to take inspiration from the social research community working outside higher education, such as investigative journalists or documentary makers, and to argue for alternative approaches to access, both institutionally and in published writing.

To work through these issues, the rest of the chapter is structured as follows. First, we revisit classic contributions to the issue of access. We suggest that most of these focus on the practical ‘how’ of accessing and departing, or what Buchanan et al. (1988) refer to as ‘getting in’ and ‘getting out’ of the field. Researchers are encouraged to read these accounts as ‘tales of the field’ (Van Maanen, 1988), and to feel a comforting kinship that assuages the suffering many feel they have experienced at the hands of awkward or obstructive gatekeepers and respondents. Second, we ask ‘why’ researchers would want to gain access to organizations. Whilst this question can be answered with the obvious ‘to do research’, this raises a broader question of why we want to conduct research at all. Some academics may be driven by the imperatives of career, promotion, research assessments and performance measurement, but we think most researchers, and especially those with a more critical approach to studying management, work and organization, are motivated by a desire to understand the lived realities of work, to locate those realities within a wider social context, and to communicate that understanding to a wider audience through writing and teaching. Indeed, this is the ambition for social scientists laid out more than 50 years ago by C. Wright Mills in *The Sociological Imagination* (Mills, 1959). Such research requires a deep understanding of the practice and experiences of those working in organizations: a reality that is rarely captured well in publicly available, corporate publications, anonymous blogs written by aggrieved ex-employees, or by quantitatively analysed survey tools that abstract both experience and context to a narrow range of discrete variables.

This raises two further related issues. First, writing about work and organization is an inescapably political process. Merely wishing to represent particular sets of interests, groups, members or particular types of organizations is a political act. The choice of whether to use research to give voice to senior management at De Beers, or to give voice to the miners working for that organization in Botswana or South Africa, will generate very different representations of the company and its business practices. It is both a political and an academic decision, guided by what has been written previously, and what the researcher deems to be of wider significance and importance in their field. When academics are blocked from accessing specific research sites, or from exploring contentious topics, whether by organizational gatekeepers or by institutional ethics committees, this is already a political act, shaping what can be seen and what can be said within academic discourse. As Jacques Rancière has argued, *contra* Althusser, one of the key functions of the police today is not to interpolate, or hail, a subject that will recognize themselves in the call, but to shift attention *away* from what might unsettle the dominant political distribution of the sensible – what can be seen and what can be said – by encouraging us to ‘move along! There is nothing to see here!’ (Rancière, 2001, p. 22).

This in turn suggests another, perhaps more profound question of what an ‘organization’ actually is, and thus *what* the research is seeking access *to*. Our third focus in this chapter is therefore to examine something that is largely overlooked in methodological discussions of access: what we are trying to access. In this section, we argue that access often assumes a physical space, with live actors moving around in it. This may be too narrow a conception of what it is we are trying to access as qualitative researchers. Here there are two sub-themes. First, we consider the nested and contentious nature of social relations within organizations, drawing on Carmel’s (2011) idea of ‘social access’, to argue that gatekeepers and key respondents we approach can actually

prevent us accessing some groups within an organization at the same time as affording access to other social groups. Second, we look to social media as a source of qualitative data in the virtual sphere where the formal boundaries of an organization can leak and data can spill over into public discourse, for example through blogging. Finally, we consider what can be done in the event of a complete failure to access an organization. Here we review the argument for covert research and describe an innovative method of provoking engagement from within organizations practised by British documentary film-maker Louis Theroux.

Throughout, we draw on key contributions to understanding access from within organization studies published in journals (e.g. Alcadipani & Hodgson, 2009; Carmel, 2011; Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016; Irvine, 2003; Irvine & Gaffikin, 2006; Karjalainen et al., 2015; Peticca-Harris et al., 2016), the ‘confessional tales’ (Van Maanen, 1988; Whyte, 1964) most often published as appendices to book-length ethnographies (e.g. Kunda, 1992), and recent debates in social science methods and methodology on access. It has been conventional to claim that little has been published on access (Alcadipani & Hodgson, 2009). This is not the case any more, especially if we look to reflexive methodological writing in the wider social sciences. The challenge today is not to find published material on negotiating access; rather, it is to understand the methodological implications of how and why we seek access, or fail to achieve it, which can stretch from the start of the research process to the end and beyond, with implications for all aspects of what we write.

HOW TO GAIN ACCESS: CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY TALES OF THE FIELD

Every research methods textbook contains a chapter, or part of one, with guidance on negotiating access and finding data. As an

activity, it inevitably forms part of every qualitative empirical study, whether data is naturally occurring or generated by the researcher. Doctoral and new researchers are often asked about their plans for gaining access, first by supervisors and subsequently by anyone listening to research plans. In this version of the debate access is, first and foremost, a practical concern.

One of the most commonly cited contributions to our understanding of organizational access was published almost 30 years ago. David Buchanan, David Boddy and James McCalman (1988) reflected on their trials in gaining access to study technological innovation in organizations. This book chapter is remarkable for its longevity and influence. The title and discussion frame access as a linear process of 'getting in, getting on, getting out, and getting back' that starts with first contact and negotiating access, moves on through how researchers need to conduct research by getting on with their respondents, before moving on to departure from the field (with the possibility of returning later for follow up research). As a frame this discussion suggests that data collection is temporally bounded to the middle two sections of the process. Perhaps echoing early anthropological accounts of entering and leaving the field, researchers are encouraged to think of the organization as a foreign land, spatially and culturally separate from the academic workplace. Data collectors have to think of ways to blend in with the locals, always remaining cognisant of the need to make a clean break, in order to analyse the data collected in as objective a way as possible.

This approach is an echo of the methods used to collect respectable and robust datasets to inform mid-twentieth-century ethnographies in management and organization studies. Melville Dalton (1959) and Donald Roy (1952) in the US and Tom Lupton (1963) in the UK are most often cited as pioneers of anthropological methods to explore modern organization. All three write of how easy it was to a) find a job in an interesting organization

and b) 'lose themselves' in the work, community and experience. Researchers always, as far as we know, departed the field with data in hand to work with and write up whilst located in a different organizational context: the university (see also Whyte, 1964). This was not always a clean or complete detachment. Lupton, for example, told stories of inviting respondents to the university to hear him present an analysis of their working lives, creating a living form of respondent validation and satisfying his own wish to be inclusive. Buchanan and colleagues, in contrast, advise keeping a distance between analysis and the presumably more prosaic concerns of the researched. They suggest writing a descriptive account of what was researched to share with the respondents, and to treat this as a 'base document' to be used later when preparing academic manuscripts. Strongly recommending that academics do not share draft research articles with respondents, their own practice was to ask respondents what kind of report they wanted, treating the structure and focus of the requested report as offering 'further insights into current management preoccupations and interests' (Buchanan et al., 1988, p. 64). Somewhere in between these two approaches lies the work of Irvine and Gaffikin (2006) who, in a key contribution that helped revive this debate, note the importance of published research being meaningful, faithful and interesting to those from whom or around whom data were collected.

These accounts of fieldwork are located at an essentially practical level. They do not relate the process of negotiating and maintaining access to the nature of the research itself. This raises two issues for us. First, like managerial preferences for particular types of report on a research project, negotiations over access can be a source of data in themselves (Land & Taylor, 2010). Second, the very idea of accessing data that is 'out there' in the field carries certain epistemological commitments. The first of these issues is well illustrated in Karen Ho's (2009) ethnographic study of Wall Street investment banks, in

which she was ultimately unable to gain the full access she had hoped for as a working investment banker. Instead, her book begins with the processes of trying to gain access to, and then find employment in, these organizations. Her inability to gain full access as an investment banker thus becomes a crucial source of information about the professional cultures of banking and their maintenance of an exclusive, elite status for employees, encouraging distance and isolation from outsiders. In a similar vein, Simon Carmel, echoing Schwartzman (1993), notes that ‘the very processes of gaining access are likely to demonstrate aspects of the culture being studied’ (2011, p. 552) so that a discussion of such should be an essential part of any ethnographic study (see Karjalainen et al., 2015, for a similar argument in relation to large knowledge intensive companies).

Rather than glossing over, or ignoring, questions of access, in these accounts ‘getting in’ is used as a valuable source of information about the forms of exclusion that constitute distinct organizational ‘insides’. This carries significant potential for unpacking the wider political processes of *organizing* that constitute, but are often absent from accounts of, specific *organizations*. For example, Judy Wajcman (2004) has criticized ethnographic perspectives in science and technology studies, and specifically actor–network theory, for privileging an ontology of presence when accounting for the organization of innovation or scientific research in a laboratory. Whilst careful attention to the concrete activities of humans and non-humans in a laboratory setting can tell us much about how science is actually done, and progresses our knowledge beyond participants’ own accounts of scientific method, what it cannot do is tell us about the wider social processes that constitute the laboratory in the first place, including those processes that systematically exclude particular types of actors from this setting. For example, an ethnographic study of a male dominated scientific institute could tell us about how those men do science, but not how

the institute itself is constituted by extensive processes of social organization, stretching from the family, through education, and into recruitment and organizational development, that simultaneously reproduce cultural gender norms and exclusionary practices. This social inequality has site-specific impacts, but these are invisible if we are only studying the organizational dynamics within the research site itself. As in Ho’s study discussed above, the explicit use of access as data can shed light upon such practices, though this depends as much on the identity and body of the researcher, as it does on their training or skills as a researcher, a point that brings into question the very idea of an objective knowledge of ‘organization’ and suggests a more situated form of knowing.

The most common ways of speaking about access carry distinct epistemological commitments, treating ‘access’ as if it were a process of gaining entry to a physical space, ‘out there’ somewhere. The question of when and where ethnographic research starts, and the methodological commitments of understanding ‘access’ in terms of data that is ‘out there’ in the field, is developed by Taylor (2015), who argues that these tales contain implicit epistemological commitments. These are drawn out in Taylor’s thoughtful reflection on longitudinal qualitative data collection processes and their particular challenges. She argues that negotiating access to organizations for a temporary research presence, such as that of classic organizational ethnographers, implies an objectivist perspective. For example, the commitment to returning to the university to gain distance and objectivity regarding the field (Whyte, 1964), or the idea of validating data by seeking confirmation from respondents on the accuracy of descriptive work (Buchanan et al., 1988), both seek to overcome the subjective entanglement of the researcher *in* the field through development of an external perspective. The implication is that qualitative work requires distance and objectivity in order to produce value-free knowledge that is somehow more

'rigorous' than a more explicitly situated account. Research participants provide data, which the analyst then takes away to assess, explain and develop theory from. The other end of the continuum that Taylor proposes finds researchers negotiating access for more collaborative, less hierarchical, more subjectively representative purposes. The epistemological framework of a research project may thus frame how access is negotiated, to what end, and what the outcome of the research can or cannot achieve. This is a quite different and more thought-provoking way to think of access. It moves beyond 'access' as an interesting story, or an additional data source, to seeing access as a means of clarifying how the knowledge produced from the research may be bounded in its political potential.

Taylor's observations and argument are present in a different form in Cunliffe and Alcadipani's (2016) examination of access. They propose three perspectives on access: instrumental, transactional and relational. Each of these approaches to negotiating and maintaining access is located according to how closely the researcher and researched engage with each other, each other's working contexts and the purpose of the research. An instrumental approach, for example, is closely bounded by the researcher, with the sole purpose of getting in and getting out, with data in pocket. A relational approach, on the other hand, is founded on a 'fluid relationship between researcher and research participants characterized by integrity, trust, and mutuality' (p. 7; see also Irvine (2003) on the issue of trust and confidentiality). The need for reflexivity is especially prominent in this latter approach, to ensure that the politicized nature of access as an ongoing, non-linear process is recognized.

A second contemporary contribution to this developing debate (Peticca-Harris et al., 2016) explores the 'how' of research access from an ontological perspective that is fundamentally practice-oriented. These authors weave their experiences as participants on a North American doctoral programme to

provide a reflexive account of negotiating access for fieldwork and propose a more dynamic way of seeing research in which researchers continually interact with potential informants, academic institutional settings and their selves. Researchers are encouraged to continually 're-strategize' in the face of challenges such as denial of access or realization that a field does not in truth exist in a meaningful sense and is therefore unable to be researched. This is a considerably more purposeful set of reflections than Taylor's, in the sense that there is an underlying instrumentality to the reflections and how they are conceptualized. Access here, reasonably given the situated nature of the reflection in a doctoral programme, is a means to an end, and therefore subject to a less politicized, more bounded reflexivity.

The practice of epistemological reflexivity in relation to access is further extended in Crowhurst and Kennedy-Macfoy's (2013) introduction to their *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* special issue on gatekeepers. They note how contributions to their special issue all locate gatekeepers as central to the conduct of research, and therefore as 'equally deserving of both methodological and theoretical reflection' (p. 457). In the reflexive accounts the editors curate here, gatekeepers emerge from a conventional objectivist perspective (cf. Taylor, 2015) to become complex social actors who are in part constituted by researchers in the field. In particular, power relations are proposed as key to understanding both the 'how' of research access and what its negotiation means for the conduct of empirical work. As researchers we can, and perhaps should, reflect on how our identities are inflected by our construction of gatekeepers and entrances to research sites, and which entrances are more open to us. For example, in his work on hospital emergency rooms, Carmel (2011) found that he was able to quickly establish connections with the predominantly male junior doctors, perhaps due to a similar middle-class, masculine identity, but that this in turn made it harder

for him to establish similar relations of trust and open communication with the nurses. Finally, Crowhurst and Kennedy-Macfoy (2013) acknowledge that the how of negotiating access for social research is changing as a result of social media use. They argue that individuals and institutions are much more difficult to identify, or define as gatekeepers, when data are hosted by social networks and websites. This is an issue we return to towards the end of this chapter.

WHY TRY TO GAIN ACCESS: THE ETHICS OF NEGOTIATING ENTRANCE AND EXIT

Epistemological and ontological reflections, and the practice of reflexivity, also point to another way of thinking about access, addressing why we as researchers try to negotiate entry to organizations. The accounts reviewed above suggest three purposes: curiosity about a private or partially hidden culture; instrumentality (i.e. to collect data in order to produce knowledge); and to inform political action or change. Most researchers would probably present answers to the why question in terms of curiosity, either empirical ('what really goes on in there?') or theoretical ('is that how organizations and management really work?'). This is the respectable rationale within our professional community for trying to gain entry to organizations, and one on which we can also build access negotiations with gatekeepers. Instrumentality also features, and is occasionally referred to. Sometimes this can take the form of a pragmatic instrumentality; many of the dissertation supervision meetings we have with undergraduate or postgraduate students centre on who they know that would allow them access to collect data. Negotiating access in the sense of identifying why we want to gain access to data or informants is clearly only partly an intellectual or methodological process.

Equally, the practice of research ethics does not exist only as a methodological or intellectual concern in relation to access. As we note below, it became more difficult and less acceptable to conduct covert research during the 1970s and 1980s. Most of the decline in use of this research method can be attributed to the development of university research ethics committees (Institutional Review Boards in North America). We have heard many stories of comical, sometimes farcical, verbal or written exchanges between researchers seeking approval and members of these committees. Qualitative research, open-ended or ethnographic fieldwork in particular, seems to cause trouble when colleagues and university managers are asked to give the host institution's blessing to a research design. These interactions could simply be categorized as the unnecessary intrusion of inflexible bureaucratic rules into a professional process, but Monaghan et al. (2013) offer a more nuanced interpretation. They argue that the superficial rationality and reasoned format of research ethics committees disguises a frustrating, decontextualizing unreason. The 'ethics creep' they observe in these committees has significant consequences for the researcher's emotional wellbeing, and in its implications that social research is untrustworthy, especially qualitative inquiry. The primary institutional concerns of ethics committees seem to go far beyond the immediate concerns of ethical research conduct, focusing on more managerial issues of legal liability and institutional reputation.

To give an example of this, one of us supervised a doctoral research project exploring drug use in the workplace. Whilst the concept of 'drugs' in the study was drawn so widely as to include alcohol, nicotine and caffeine, even a more restrictive focus on illegal narcotics would still have encompassed a large proportion of the adult UK population (Smith & Land, 2014). Despite this, and based largely on misunderstandings of the size of the population the study was drawing upon, the university research ethics committee took

a full year, from a three-year PhD project, to grant approval, and even then required such significant changes to the process for recruiting respondents that access was made much more difficult than it should have been. Whilst some of the reasons offered for the committee's reluctance seemed to be honest concerns with researcher safety and respondent anonymity, these were based on an almost complete lack of knowledge concerning the size of the population for the study, and an almost wilful disregard of the breadth of the operational definition of 'drug'. In attempting to clarify the committee's expectations, conversations with a non-academic administrator, who functioned as a de facto gatekeeper to the committee, suggested that the main concern was that if the research were to explain why drug use occurs at work, this could be seen as condoning such behaviour and thus bring the university into disrepute. Indeed, a concern for the university's reputation was part of the research ethics committee's remit, so this was, apparently, a legitimate concern.

However, this 'concern' only makes sense if there is an elision of the distinction between explanation and understanding, on the one hand, and approving of, or condoning, on the other. We are increasingly used to seeing such a slippage in mass media reporting on terrorism, which regularly equates explanation with moral justification and is concerned first with condemning terrorism, and only secondarily, if at all, with understanding it. This type of confusion, on the part of the committee, was compounded by their apparent ignorance of even basic sociological facts concerning the size of the target population and context of drug use in the UK. Whilst our own estimates placed the population for the study in the millions, the responses of the ethics committee suggested that they thought the researcher would be working with a tiny population who probably all knew each other. Given that most members of the ethics committee were not working in the social sciences, and that the secretary/gatekeeper had a professional background in catering management,

these misapprehensions may be understandable, but that makes them no less mistaken. Sadly, our access to the research committee in our own institution was so problematic that it took a full year just to get the permission to recruit respondents. Leaving aside the farce that a concern with the ethical treatment of human beings nearly derailed a research council funded project, and with it a researcher's extremely promising academic career, this example shows how access today, at least in UK higher education, does not depend entirely on the researcher's motivations. The 'why' of access must also account for the sometimes contradictory motivations of institutional bodies such as funding councils and ethics committees, as well as their specific blind spots and areas of ignorance.

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACCESS? CULTURES, ORGANIZATIONS, EXPERIENCES

As noted above, ethics committees can have difficulty understanding what social researchers are trying to gain access to. In proposals, researchers often promise anonymity to individuals and organizations, partly as a means to protect employees and institutions from harm. This principle has become an almost obligatory commitment to the point of thoughtless reflex, but has recently been challenged both as a principle and as a practical pledge (Tilley & Woodthorpe, 2011). As we have argued elsewhere, the automatic assumption of anonymity as a norm for organizational research is particularly problematic when the status of 'subject' is extended to an organization. It is underpinned by an anthropomorphic extension of human rights to an organization that is both ontologically and politically problematic (Taylor & Land, 2014; cf. Bakan, 2005).

There are two main issues that arise here concerning the ontological status of 'the organization' to which access for research

is sought, both relating to the question of whether an organization is a coherent entity. As we noted earlier, the language of access and ‘getting in’ works on the basis of a spatial metaphor of organizations that conceives of them as relatively coherent and bounded physical entities. This may have made a certain sense when researchers were thinking mainly of large-scale industrial organizations behind walls that could be approached as a foreign land, but today the organization is more often conceived as a network, or value-chain, comprised of varying links, only some of which may be underpinned by traditional stable employment contracts that assume physical co-presence within a single location. Some organizational members will be sub-contracted, self-employed or employed by intermediaries such as agencies providing temporary work. In other cases, value productive activities include ‘work’ undertaken outside paid employment, encompassing prosumers or co-creators (Zwick et al., 2008), as with Facebook, where users actually produce the media content and employees only manage the platform (Beverungen et al., 2015). Similar examples would be Uber or Airbnb, which neither own the primary capital used to deliver services – cars and property – nor directly employ the front-line service delivery workers – car and property owners (Srnicsek, 2016). In such a context, the very idea of ownership and who is inside or outside the organization, and thus who or what the researcher needs to gain access to, is much less stable than simple metaphors of ‘getting in’ might suggest.

The second point applies to even the most stable, physically co-located organization. Most ethnographic researchers are concerned with organizational cultures, but the literature has long recognized that organizations are not single, unitary cultures but fragmented or plural (Martin, 1992). Organizations are nested social systems, and gaining access to subcultures, or sub-groups within these, is always and necessarily a political process of gaining ‘social access’, not only physical

access. To gain effective social access means establishing some sort of rapport and trust with key actors and groups but, as Carmel (2011) notes, successfully negotiating social access with one group might actually impede social access with another group. To take a very simple example, if the main gatekeeper and sponsor for access is a senior manager, then those further down the hierarchy, or trade union representatives, are likely to be mistrustful and suspicious of the researcher. This goes beyond ‘getting in’ or even ‘getting on’ in the organization, suggesting a need to ‘get around’ in the organization, moving between social groups (Carmel, 2011). Whilst this makes sense from a conventional ethnographic perspective that seeks to map out the various cultures and structures of interaction that make up the everyday achievement of organizing, it falls back on the objectivism that Taylor (2015) has critiqued. It assumes that the researcher both should, and can, move neutrally between social groups and account for them all objectively. A contrasting view would suggest that researchers necessarily enter organizations as politically engaged actors, already located within the social context of the organization, and within the wider social context of which it is a part.

This last point takes us back to our earlier arguments against the promise of unreflective anonymity. Organizations can be represented as powerful social actors and held up as exemplars or villains in political discourse. By automatically assuming anonymity of case organizations, researchers take themselves out of public debates over organization and its effects. This public discourse has been amplified by the ease of communication that the Internet and social media have enabled. As such, we would suggest there are strong arguments in favour of identifying *some* research sites and *some* individual participants. For example, identification may contribute to a researcher’s obligation to be accountable to a funder in disseminating research as widely as possible to facilitate impact. Participants may

also request to be named, perhaps to claim an act that they are proud of. Finally, Tilley and Woodthorpe (2011) note the distinction between anonymity and confidentiality, and in particular the possibility that the former does not guarantee the latter. Again, this is particularly salient in research that makes use of data from social media and the Internet.

EMERGING FROM 'FAILURE': THE CONSEQUENCES OF DENIAL OF ACCESS

Peticca-Harris et al. (2016) set out useful and thought-provoking strategies for the researcher confronted with closed doors and lack of access. Ultimately, a lack of entry to an organization or lack of participants willing to share their experiences of work and management may lead us to switch topics, abandon a project or come to terms with failure. This is, in some ways, a positive attitude towards lack of access, a form of 'moving on' in which the researcher accepts the death of the project, to explore what else is practicable or possible. The research idea may resurface in a different form, the reading might be useful elsewhere, and perhaps the conversations with gatekeepers will result in an invitation to collect data on something else.

Karjalainen et al. (2015) also explore denial of access in their open discussion of a partially 'failed' project. They gained access to two large consultancies to collect data on work-life boundaries, but were then denied by a further three. Two things emerge from their reflection: first, how time and energy consuming access negotiation can be; and second, how rich the process can be if treated reflexively and analytically. They conclude that access negotiations, especially negotiations that are superficially unsuccessful, must be understood as methodologically and empirically valuable. This point is echoed by Cunliffe and Alcadiyani (2016) in their observation that 'the experience of gaining

and maintaining access can itself tell us a lot about practices, processes, and power in the organizations we want to study'.

However, we also think that a flat denial of access may also open up further possibilities for researchers. After a long period of categorization as unethical or unnecessary, fresh arguments have been made recently in favour of covert research. Calvey (2008) provides the strongest argument for covert methods in the negotiation of access to fieldwork settings, noting that there is a 'submerged tradition' of this practice that is often neglected. He argues that research ethics approval processes unreflectively separate covert and overt methods. In this process, 'covert' has taken on connotations of unreasonable or even illegal deception. In addition, gaining informed consent from participants has often come, according to Calvey, to mean adherence to an instrumental, formulaic process which neither respects nor honours subjects. He also notes that the boundaries between 'data' and 'not-data' are inevitably blurred for qualitative researchers hanging around in organizations, implying that we all practise a degree of covert-ness. This in turn means that qualitative social research occupies a continuum of overt/covert, rather than a location on one side of a dichotomy.

Calvey's argument for covert research focuses on the quality of data. However, he also raises 'public interest' justifications for collecting data in this way, citing Goffman's (1961) study of asylums and Dalton's (1959) analysis of the moralities of management practice. Both studies are highly influential and still regularly cited in our field; neither would exist without the option of conducting research covertly. This tradition continues in some studies of work and organization, in for example Jenny Chan and colleagues' work on Foxconn, in which she undertook paid employment in the company in order to examine its employment and management practices, without informing the company officially (Ngai et al., 2016). In such cases there is a strong argument that information

on unethical employment practices should be collected and analysed for the public good, and that this trumps the rights to privacy of a fictional subject, the corporation. Covert research should therefore be considered more regularly, where appropriate, with the encouragement of research supervisors, ethics committees and methodologists writing in textbooks and collections like this. It is also worth noting, with Calvey (2008), that being covert is often part of a researcher's practice when conducting research close to home in universities. We can see this most clearly in recent autoethnographies of higher education (e.g. Parker, 2013; Sparkes, 2007). This approach to collecting data is clearly covert, inasmuch as most members of the organization around the researcher have not been appraised of the fact that they are being defined as respondents in a research project. It also raises interesting ethical questions concerning the grounds on which an employee might legitimately be prohibited from speaking about their own work experiences.

There are of course dangers to conducting research covertly. Within the profession, some colleagues will continue to think of covert research as inherently unethical, unreasonably deceptive and as a betrayal of respondents. Some journals may refuse to publish analysis based on covert research, and it could be a significant risk for early career or doctoral researchers. Outside the academic setting, covert research may be critiqued as unreliable. It clearly demands strong, clear, professional, collegiate, institutional support, before and during fieldwork.

Our second alternative to denial of access comes from outside the academy. Methodologists sometimes note the similarities between what qualitative researchers do and how investigative journalists work. Such a comparison can, we think, be helpful in relation to the practicalities of collecting data. British documentary maker Louis Theroux has been exploring specific subcultures for many years, often focusing on peculiarly American communities, in an attempt

to shed light on their wider host culture. Watching Theroux's films as a researcher, the level of organizational and individual access he accomplishes is striking. Many of the communities he enters are constitutionally secretive, 'dirty' in a sociological sense, or illegal. Despite this, Theroux is able to negotiate time with community members, and to film them explaining how they live and why they follow the belief systems they do.

Despite his experience and skill, however, Theroux has been unable to access one community, the Scientology organization. Legally categorized as a religion, Scientologists are notorious for their reluctance to permit 'outsiders' (i.e. non-believers) into the physical and social spaces where belief is practised. The film team specifically wanted to avoid interviewing ex-believers or making a documentary about their failure to gain access, both common fallback positions when organizational doors remain firmly closed (Theroux, 2015). Theroux decided to develop a third approach, which he calls 'negative access', based on recent developments in film-making and recent Scientology responses to critical accounts.

First, Theroux avoided the convention of interviewing ex-members by instead filming re-enactments of their experiences within the organization. This directed role-playing allowed Theroux and his subjects to explore questions of responsibility and discipline more closely than in an interview format. Role-play is, interestingly, a well-established but very neglected research method in the social sciences (Robinson, 2004; see Johnson (1994) for a classic and insightful use of the method). However, this was just the initial stage of the 'negative access' negotiation. Scientologists have developed an approach to what they understand as attempts to make critical or negative accounts of their organization. It involves them attempting to 'turn the tables' on the researcher or journalist, by making a negative or critical film about them and their work.

Theroux realized that he could work with the interactions created through the

Scientologists' attacks on him to provide layers of emotional and moral depth to his understanding of the organization and thus its representation in film. This, it seems to us, is an intriguing way of gaining access to the experience of an organization, without actually entering its buildings or negotiating formal access to it. As a further alternative when denied access, we think it is worth considering. Provocation of the kind that Theroux practices will of course bring dangers to the researcher, particularly if the organization or community being provoked is powerful. However, as an approach, carefully used, it might also result in more politically engaged research by generating unusual insights into powerful organizational forms.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have sought to examine the process of research access in terms of *how* we gain access, *why* we need access and *what* researchers are seeking access to. By presenting some of the practical, ontological, epistemological and ethical challenges of securing access to research sites, we have tried to highlight the non-linear, contested and institutionally specific nature of 'access' for academic researchers. In this we have emphasized the ways in which a reflexive engagement with this process can provide new sources of data, and encouraged an ethical and political responsibility for our relations with those we research and the wider publics that our research addresses, especially in how we represent our relations with the former to the latter in our accounts of doing research.

In the final section we also considered what to do when access, conventionally understood, is blocked. Here we think that it is important for social researchers to recognize that changing organizational forms and new technologies of communication can provide both new research tools and new ways

of understanding and analysing what 'organization' is, where it lies and how we might gain access to it. We have also suggested that further debate is needed concerning issues around anonymity in organizational research, and over what institutional ethics committees think about social research and the responsibilities of a university to the wider public good. If academic research is to remain relevant to the world outside, then academic researchers may need to engage with other traditions of research, including more covert forms of investigation, regularly deployed by investigative journalists, or the kinds of 'negative access' suggested by documentary makers. A formal rejection of access by organizational gatekeepers need not mean the end of a research project. With some creativity and reflexivity, even an outright refusal of access can be a valuable source of data and can open up alternative avenues of investigation that may, ultimately, be more informative than having a single gatekeeper hold the door open for you.

Perhaps, like Kafka's unlikely hero in *The Castle*, we will never gain access through the front door, and may never feel that we really made it into an organization at all. However, there are many ways into an organization, and organization spills over into many other locations, as when workers and officials from Kafka's castle leak out into the streets, homes and bars of the surrounding town. In this sense, the tale of our own struggle to find an organizational entrance and map its many connections may prove as informative as being granted easy access to what the organization's gatekeepers want us to see.

REFERENCES

- Alcadipani, R. and Hodgson, D. (2009) 'By any means necessary? Ethnographic access, ethics and the critical researcher', *Tamara: Journal of Critical Postmodern Organization Science*, 7(4): 127–46.

- Bakan, J. (2005) *The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power*. New York: Free Press.
- Beverungen, A., Böhm, S. and Land, C. (2015) 'Free labour, social media, management: Challenging Marxist organization studies', *Organization Studies*, 36(4): 473–89.
- Buchanan, D., Boddy, D. and McCalman, J. (1988) 'Getting in, getting on, getting out, and getting back', in Bryman, A. (ed.) *Doing Research in Organizations*, pp. 53–67. London: Routledge.
- Calvey, D. (2008) 'The art and politics of covert research: Doing "situated ethics" in the field', *Sociology*, 42(5): 905–18.
- Carmel, S. (2011) 'Social access in the workplace: Are ethnographers gossips?' *Work, Employment and Society*, 25(3): 551–60.
- Crowhurst, I. and Kennedy-macfoy, M. (2013) 'Troubling gatekeepers: Methodological considerations for social research', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 16(6): 457–62.
- Cunliffe, A. and Alcadipani, R. (2016) 'The politics of access in fieldwork: Immersion, backstage dramas, and deception', *Organizational Research Methods*, 19(4): 535–61.
- Dalton, M. (1959) *Men Who Manage*. New York: Wiley.
- Goffman, E. (1961) *Asylums*. New York: Doubleday.
- Ho, K. (2009) *Liquidated: An Ethnography of Wall Street*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Irvine, H. (2003) 'Trust me! A personal account on confidentiality issues in an organizational research project', *Accounting Forum*, 27(2): 111–31.
- Irvine, H. and Gaffikin, M. (2006) 'Getting in, getting on and getting out: Reflections on a qualitative research project', *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability*, 19(1): 115–45.
- Johnson, C. (1994) 'Gender, legitimate authority, and leader-subordinate conversations', *American Sociological Review*, 59(1): 122–35.
- Karjalainen, M., Niemistö, C. and Hearn, J. (2015) 'Unpacking the problem of research access(es): The case of large knowledge intensive companies', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 10(3): 274–93.
- Kunda, G. (1992) *Engineering Culture: Control and Commitment in a High-Tech Corporation*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Land, C. and Taylor, S. (2010) 'Surf's up: Work, life, balance and brand in a New Age capitalist organization', *Sociology*, 44(3): 395–413.
- Lupton, T. (1963) *On the Shop Floor: Two studies of Workshop Organization and Output*. London: Pergamon.
- Martin, J. (1992) *Cultures in Organizations: Three Perspectives*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Mills, C.W. (1959) *The Sociological Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Monaghan, L., O'Dwyer, M. and Gabe, J. (2013) 'Seeking university Research Ethics Committee approval: The emotional vicissitudes of a "rationalised" process', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 16(1): 65–80.
- Ngai, P., Yuan, S., Yuhua, G., Huilin, L., Chan J. and Selden, M. (2016) 'Apple, Foxconn, and Chinese workers' struggles from a global labor perspective', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 17(2): 166–85.
- Parker, M. (2013) 'University, Ltd.: Changing a business school', *Organization*, 21(2): 281–92.
- Peticca-Harris, A., DeGama, N. and Elias, S. (2016) 'A dynamic process model for finding informants and gaining access in qualitative research', *Organizational Research Methods*, 19(3): 376–401.
- Rancière, J. (2001) 'Ten theses on politics', *Theory & Event*, 5(3). Online at www.after1968.org/app/webroot/uploads/RanciereTHESESONPOLITICS.pdf
- Robinson, D. (2004) 'Role playing', in Lewis-Beck, M., Bryman, A. and Liao, T.F. (eds) *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods*, pp. 976–77. London: Sage.
- Roy, D. (1952) 'Quota restriction and gold-bricking in a machine shop', *American Journal of Sociology*, 57(5): 427–42.
- Schwartzman, H. (1993) *Ethnography in Organizations*. London: Sage.
- Smith, C. and Land, C. (2014) 'Pharmacological routes to everyday exceptionality', *Culture and Organization*, 20(4): 269–87.
- Sparkes, A. (2007) 'Embodiment, academics and the audit culture: A story seeking

- consideration', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(4): 521–50.
- Srnicek, N. (2016) *Platform Capitalism*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Stake, R. (2005) 'Qualitative case studies', in Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (eds) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd edition, pp. 443–66. London: Sage.
- Taylor, R. (2015) 'Beyond anonymity: Temporality and the production of knowledge in a qualitative longitudinal study', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 18(3): 281–92.
- Taylor, S. and Land, C. (2014) 'Organizational anonymity and the negotiation of research access', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 9(2): 98–109.
- Theroux, L. (2015) 'My scientology movie by Louis Theroux: "I felt like I'd been blooded"', *The Guardian*, 14 October 2015, www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/14/louis-theroux-my-scientology-movie-i-felt-like-id-been-blooded, last accessed 22 October 2015.
- Tilley, L. & Woodthorpe, K. (2011) 'Is it the end for anonymity as we know it? A critical examination of the ethical principle of anonymity in the context of 21st century demands on the qualitative researcher', *Qualitative Research*, 11(2): 197–212.
- Van Maanen, J. (1988) *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Wajcman, J. (2004) *Technofeminism*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Whyte, W.F. (1964) 'The slum: On the evolution of street corner society', in Vidich, A.J., Bensman, J. and Stein, M.R. (eds) *Reflections on Community Studies*, pp. 3–69. New York: Harper & Row.
- Zwick, D., Bonsu, S. and Darmody, A. (2008) 'Putting consumers to work: "Co-creation" and new marketing govern-mentality', *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 8(2): 163–96.

Choosing Participants

Mark N.K. Saunders and Keith Townsend

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with the challenges of choosing participants for qualitative research. The choice of ‘choosing participants’ for the chapter title, rather than ‘selecting a sample’, is important for three reasons. First, it signifies that the focus of the chapter is wider than just the techniques for selecting samples, including challenges such as accessing participants and justifying and reporting their choice. Second, the use of the term participant, rather than the frequently used alternatives of ‘case’ or ‘element’ (Saunders et al., 2016), emphasises that we are concerned with choosing people who in almost all cases will be asked if they consent to participate. Finally, the phrase highlights implicitly that albeit occasionally, it may be possible to choose all potential participants in a target population rather than a sample (Saunders, 2012).

Usually within qualitative research in business and management, our choice of research

participants involves choosing and gaining access to a small sub-group or sample from a larger target (that is, bounded) population comprising the potential participants who are the focus of our research (Miles et al., 2013). Our choice and the subsequent gaining of access are, invariably, fraught with problems and subject to challenges. Although ideally we may wish to collect data from particular participants, this will depend upon being able to gain access to these people. Even for participants within organisations where physical access to collect data has been granted, there will still be a need to maintain this access and engender cognitive access with each participant. Additionally, the time and financial resources we have available for our research may also constrain the data we will be able to collect and subsequently analyse, again highlighting the necessity to choose a sub-group of participants (Saunders et al., 2016).

Our chapter takes as its starting premise that the research aim and objectives inform the research design (Brinkmann & Kvale,

2015); in other words that our research method, and as part of this the research participant or participants that we chose, need to enable the research question to be answered (Saunders et al., 2016). Within this we recognise that for more orthodox qualitative research relying on propositional knowledge from the literature, research questions will usually be reasonably well defined. In such situations, the characteristics of potentially suitable participants are relatively easy to establish. In contrast, for more emergent qualitative research such as that where the research idea is derived from naturalistic settings (Patton, 2015), these are likely to be more open, even though there will still be research questions. For such emergent research, the characteristics of suitable participants are likely to need to be, at least in the early stages of the research, defined more broadly and driven subsequently by emergent theory.

In writing this chapter we have, whilst recognising the plurality of philosophical positions and heterogeneity evident in qualitative research in business and management (Johnson et al., 2006), adopted a broadly pragmatist philosophy. Our aim is to highlight and discuss a number of potential challenges that we consider qualitative researchers, whatever their philosophical position, may need to consider when choosing participants. In so doing we hope to offer knowledge that can be of utility to the practice of qualitative researchers. Within this stance we conceptualise useful knowledge as that which facilitates successful action through creating solutions to problems, informing future practice (Dewey, 1997 [1908]; Saunders et al., 2016). To this end we highlight four challenges (problems) associated with choosing participants and indicate potential credible, well-founded and reliable solutions that can inform practice (Wicks & Freeman, 1998).

Taking a processual view, we commence with the challenge of gaining access to potential participants and associated organisational issues and pressures for methodological rigour

(Van De Ven & Johnson, 2006). This is followed by a consideration of the challenge of choosing one or more suitable participants who can provide what Alvesson and Ashcraft (2012, p. 240) refer to as 'reliable gateways' into the practices of business and management. Within this we consider the utility of different non-probability and probability sampling techniques, focusing in particular on the former. Our third challenge concerns how many participants will be sufficient for the research to be considered authentic and credible by its consumers (Baker & Edwards, 2012). In discussing this we consider both the planning and reporting of qualitative research, considering expert opinion and empirically grounded advice, and question the appropriateness of the apparent 'gold standard' (Guest et al., 2006, p. 60) of data saturation. Our fourth challenge concerns the reporting and justifying of participant selection and meeting the expectation of transparency within this (Robinson, 2014). Interwoven through these four challenges is the need to act ethically and ensure participants' rights are respected. Our chapter closes with a summary of the challenges raised, which we believe all business and management researchers need to take heed of when choosing participants.

THE CHALLENGE OF GAINING ACCESS

Collection of primary data in qualitative business and management research almost invariably depends on first gaining, and subsequently maintaining, access to participants. Within the literature, access is considered at three levels: first, the gaining of physical, or in the case of Internet mediated research virtual, access to organisations, groups or individuals; second, the subsequent maintenance of this access; and third, achieving cognitive access with each participant (Saunders et al., 2016). Although considered in research methods and methodology texts, these aspects of gaining access are, as we discuss

in our fourth challenge, rarely reported in journal articles. Yet for all research these levels of access are crucial as, if permission to collect data is denied, the choice of participants is immaterial.

As researchers in business and management, our position is weak compared to organisations, groups and individuals from whom we are seeking to collect data (Lee, 1993), as we have relatively little to offer in return. Organisations and groups are likely to receive numerous requests for such access, rarely agreeing to more than a few, if any of these. Our request to gain physical or virtual access to collect data is therefore one of many they receive and, even if considered, may fail to interest the gatekeeper or broker who controls such access, resulting in a refusal. Such refusals can be for a number of reasons related to the perceived value of the work to those granting access, the time required of participants, the sensitivity (however defined) of the topic to the gatekeeper and potential participants and associated issues of confidentiality, and perceptions about the researcher's credibility (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Saunders, 2012). In addition, organisations or groups may find themselves in situations where, owing to external events unrelated to their perceptions of the research or the researcher, they are unable to offer access.

Such difficulties with gaining physical access result in many business and management researchers adopting (although unfortunately few explicitly report) an opportunistic approach (Buchanan et al., 2013 [1988]) to gaining access. Access to organisational gatekeepers is, usually, brokered through friends and colleagues (Okumus et al., 2007; Saunders, 2012) and can be thought of, in sampling terminology, as gaining access to the target population that will be the focus of the research (Kervin, 1999) from which participants will be chosen. Although the granting of such access invariably includes an element of chance (Okumus et al., 2007), it is to a large extent dependent upon the quality

of the researcher's networks, careful preparation both in terms of understanding the specific organisation or group and their likely requirements of a researcher, and being able to explain clearly how the research design will be applied in their particular context. Initial discussions with friends and colleagues are, combined with information derived from secondary sources such as organisations and groups' web pages, likely to be helpful in this regard. These discussions may also highlight the need for potential compromise in the research design.

The potential need for compromise when gaining physical access highlights a particular challenge emphasised by the on-going rigour and relevance debates. These point to a need for business and management research to be both theoretically and methodologically rigorous, and at the same time embracing the world of practice and being of practical relevance (Hodgkinson et al., 2001; Wensley, 2011). Organisational or group requirements to grant access can lead potentially to the researcher compromising on methodological rigour (Van De Ven & Johnson, 2006), in order to be able to collect data. This conflict is summarised by Buchanan et al. (2013 [1988], pp. 53–4):

Fieldwork is permeated with the conflict between what is theoretically desirable on the one hand and what is practically possible on the other. It is desirable to ensure representativeness in the sample, uniformity in interview procedures, adequate data collection across the range of topics to be explored, and so on. But the members of organisations block access to information, constrain the time allowed for interviews, lose your questionnaires, go on holiday, and join other organisations in the middle of your unfinished study. In the conflict between the desirable and the possible, the possible always wins.

Access from the researcher's perspective is a continuous process, rather than an initial or single event (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Okumus et al., 2007). Indeed, McDonald et al. (2009) remind us that even in funded and supported industry-based research

'access' does not assure 'on-going access', it is rather an 'incremental continuum' (Walford, 2001). Such physical or virtual access, particularly for emergent research, can be iterative and incremental. Access commences when we first gain permission to carry out an initial exploratory part of our research. As the research focus and questions are refined and become more precisely defined, we seek further access to undertake other aspects. In other designs, including both emergent and orthodox qualitative research, we may need to collect data over a period of time emphasising the importance of an on-going relationship with participants. Consequently, once physical access to an organisation has been achieved, this on-going relationship with participants, and organisational gatekeepers, needs to be maintained.

Despite physical or virtual access having been negotiated, it is still usually necessary (other than for covert research) to gain acceptance and informed consent (cognitive access) from participants other than those with whom physical access was negotiated. Wherever a potential participant refuses to take part, this may reduce the likelihood that we can collect the data we need to answer our research question (Robson, 2011). Leverage saliency theory (Groves & Couper, 1998), although originally developed in relation to survey research, can also offer useful insights to gaining cognitive access in qualitative research methods (see Cachia & Millward, 2011). It reveals that although some aspects of potential participants' decisions to consent are outside the researcher's control, others, such as the giving of advanced notice, incentives, university sponsorship and relevance of the topic, can increase the likelihood of the participant consenting. In particular, it emphasises the importance of personalising the request to take part, offering convincing assurances of anonymity and addressing each participant's 'idiosyncratic concerns' (Groves et al., 2000, p. 299). Requests to take part may therefore have different outcomes

depending upon the degree to which each potential participant's specific concerns are addressed, and aspects with which they identify positively can be leveraged (Maynard et al., 2010), without them being coerced.

Research ethics rightly highlights the importance of not using coercion, and the importance of providing potential participants with the opportunity to make an informed choice regarding whether or not to take part, emphasising that deception in any form is rarely considered acceptable (Bell & Bryman, 2007). Yet, we note that gaining informed consent can in contexts such as researching corruption or illegitimate or covert practices reduce the likelihood of participation (Myers, 2013). In such situations, Punch (1986) argues, deception may be acceptable where data are not accessible by other means. However, whilst informed consent is, in most contexts, crucial to the collection of data, it remains of limited utility unless participants are able and willing to provide data that will enable the research question to be answered. Indeed, it can be argued that collecting data from participants that is of no value to the research is unethical as it is wasteful of their time. This leads to our next challenge, how to choose participants who can provide data that will enable the research question to be answered.

THE CHALLENGE OF CHOOSING ONE OR MORE SUITABLE PARTICIPANTS

Within qualitative business and management research, one or more participants are chosen on the basis that the data they will provide will be sufficient to enable the research question to be answered. In other words, the data will provide reliable gateways into the practice of business and management. This means the chosen participant or participants need to be suitable to our research (we will consider the challenge of how many participants are sufficient in a subsequent section!). Suitability,

in relation to participants, is often used to refer to how those chosen and the data collected from them represent a larger population to which they belong (Becker, 1998). However, for some ontological positions (and research questions) such representation may be considered an inappropriate concept. It also has distinct and differing connotations depending upon whether non-probability or probability sampling techniques are used (Saunders et al., 2016). Although we recognise probability sampling techniques are used infrequently in qualitative research, we still consider it worthwhile to mention them briefly. We note it is rarely feasible to either collect data from sufficient participants to meet assumptions for statistical analyses or appropriate to use such analyses, other than in certain complex mixed methods research designs (Nastasi et al., 2010). However, it is still possible to collect data for qualitative analyses from participants chosen at random (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Within this section we therefore begin by considering, albeit briefly, the differences between probability (random) and non-probability (non-random) sampling techniques and their utility in qualitative business and management research. We then focus on non-probability techniques and, in particular, on the challenge of deciding which characteristics are relevant to choosing potential participants, and the associated sampling techniques to choose participants that can provide reliable gateways to the data.

Non-Probability and Probability Sampling and Representation

For both non-probability and probability sampling techniques, the challenge is to choose one or more participants that will enable us to answer our research question. Where the focus is on gaining understandings and insights that enable information rich (Patton, 2015) rather than statistical explanation, non-probability sampling techniques are likely to be used and qualitative data collected. Using

one or more of these techniques, individual participants are chosen on the basis of the researcher's judgement regarding their likely utility. They may therefore comprise, for example, participants considered extreme, unusual, critical or typical, as opposed to being similar to the target population.

In using non-probability sampling techniques, either on their own or in combination, we actively choose the participants to include in our research, the choice of participants being driven by a non-positivistic epistemology. By choosing certain participants, we are excluding all other potential participants in our target population. As a consequence, some of the target population will have a chance of being chosen as participants whilst others will not. In both orthodox and emergent designs, choice of participants is rarely entirely pre-specified; selection of participants evolving after fieldwork has begun and, often, being conceptually (theory) driven (Miles et al., 2013). Participants will be chosen for a range of reasons such as gaining new insights into phenomena, enabling phenomena to be assessed in a new manner, or to support the development of new understandings from which (dependent upon the research question) new theories may be developed (Miles et al., 2013). Where such theoretical generalisations are developed, they are based on analytic generalisability, reasoned judgement being made regarding their transferability to other situations. Invariably, the use of non-probability sampling techniques precludes generalising statistically about a target population, although we note that quota samples are used (primarily in quantitative survey based research) as a substitute for a probability sample, where a sampling frame is not available (Baker et al., 2013).

As intimated earlier, probability sampling techniques can be, although rarely are, used in qualitative research. Whilst some (e.g. Miles et al., 2013) note their use can add credibility where the number of potential participants chosen purposively is too large, it can also be argued such techniques are

epistemologically incompatible with qualitative research (Eby et al., 2009). Probability sampling techniques are normally used to select participants where the focus is gaining understandings and insights that are statistically generalisable to a target population. Sufficient participants are selected at random to represent the target population, the sampling technique or techniques being adopted to ensure those chosen are as similar as possible to that population. Random selection eliminates the researcher's judgement from the actual choice of individual participants. Subsequently, collection of quantitative data from comparatively large numbers of participants allows statistical inferences to be made.

Probability sampling techniques select each participant from a sampling frame (complete list) of all potential participants within the specified target population. If it is not possible to obtain or create such a list, then such techniques cannot be used, as it will not be possible to specify the probability of each participant within the target population being selected. The utility of data collected from a probability sample depends, in part, upon the accuracy with which the participants selected represent the target population (Barnett, 2002). It also means that if, for example, the data are collected from a sample of employees (participants) from one organisation (the target population), although it is possible to generalise theoretically beyond the target population, we should not generalise statistically to other, or indeed the total population of all, organisations. However, given the relative lack of use within qualitative research, we will not consider these techniques further.

Non-Probability Techniques

Within the literature a wide range of non-probability sampling techniques are identified; Miles et al. (2013), for example, list 16, whilst Patton (2015) outline 40. Each offers predetermined selection criteria for

participants, the challenge being to use those that are most relevant to the research question. Those techniques that are often used in qualitative research can be grouped into three types: purposive, volunteer and haphazard; alongside a fourth, quota sampling, which is used primarily in quantitative research. We summarise those most widely used by qualitative business and management researchers in Table 28.1.

Purposive techniques, where participants are selected on the basis of the researcher's judgement regarding relevance to answering the research question, are the most widely used in qualitative research (Miles et al., 2013). These techniques bring to the forefront the challenge of choosing a participant or participants who will enable the research question to be answered. Like the other non-probability sampling techniques, they are normally used to choose a small number of participants who will, hopefully, be particularly informative. Equally though, the ingenuity and flexibility of good researchers allows these challenges to be addressed in innovative ways that progress the data collection process (see Ellem, 2009; Price & Townsend, 2009).

Heterogeneous and homogenous sampling techniques are used to select a small group of participants, rather than just one. Heterogeneous, or maximum variation, purposive sampling relies on the researcher's judgement to first identify relevant diversity characteristics as criteria and then choose participants that meet these criteria to provide maximum variation in the data collected. These variations are argued to represent the strength of this technique, as any patterns that emerge from the data are likely to represent the key themes and should allow them to be both described and explained (Patton, 2015). In contrast, homogenous sampling relies upon the researcher's judgement to identify one particular relevant group or sub-group and then choose participants from within. The data collected from participants is therefore likely to be similar, allowing for both

Table 28.1 Utility of frequently used non-probability sampling techniques

<i>Type</i>	<i>Sampling technique</i>	<i>Nature of participant(s) chosen</i>	<i>Potential relevance to a research question</i>
Purposive – choice of participants	Heterogeneous	Diverse characteristics, maximum variation	Participants reveal or illuminate key themes
Based upon the researcher's judgement	Homogenous	Similar characteristics, limited variation	Participants reveal or illuminate depth, minor differences apparent in key themes
	Theoretical	As needed on basis of developing categories	Participants cumulatively test emerging theory
	Typical case	Normal or usual, not definitive	Participant(s) provide an illustration, rich account
	Critical case	Crucial to what is being researched	Participant(s) important or can make a point dramatically
	Extreme case	Extreme or unusual	Participant(s) reveal the most relevant to understanding the more typical
	Opportunistic	As revealed	Participant(s) allow new leads to be followed
	Politically important	Salient and connected	Participant(s) attract attention (excluded to avoid undesired attention)
Volunteer – choice of participants	Snowball (chain)	Similar, identified by existing participants	Participants are difficult to identify
Based on those who offer to take part	Self-selection	Strong feelings about research questions, self identify to take part	Participant(s) willing to devote time
Haphazard –choice based on convenience of access	Convenience	Unclear, other than willingness to take part	Participant(s) readily available, easy to access, save resources

greater in-depth exploration and minor differences to be more apparent.

Theoretical sampling represents a special case of purposive sampling, particularly associated with Grounded Theory, in which participants are chosen cumulatively to support inductive theory development (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The researcher relies upon her or his judgement to decide initially from where to choose participants, rather than what to choose them for. Subsequent participants are chosen to inform and test concepts that appear relevant to the emerging theory and evolving storyline that is being derived from simultaneous collecting, coding and analysis of the data.

Other forms of purposive sampling (Table 28.1) address the challenge of choosing either one or a small group of participants with specified characteristics for a variety of distinct purposes. Typical case purposive

sampling relies on the researcher's judgement to identify participants who, within the context of the research, can be characterised as normal or usual and used for illustrative purposes. As such, the participant or participants chosen may be considered representative, although not in a statistical sense. In contrast, critical case sampling relies on the researcher's judgement to select one or more participants on the basis that they are important to answering the research question or can be used to make a point dramatically. Patton (2015) offers a number of clues that suggest a critical case. These relate to whether a potential participant is crucial to the operation of what is being researched or, alternatively, can provide a vibrant illustration. In addition, they can be chosen to provide supportive evidence of the possibility of something occurring. In contrast, extreme case purposive

sampling relies on the researcher's judgement to choose one or more unusual or extreme participants on the basis that such data, when collected, will offer more insights that can be used to answer the research question. This is derived from the premise that findings from extreme cases will be relevant to understanding or explaining more typical cases.

Opportunistic purposive sampling acknowledges how, within qualitative research, the unexpected can occur, for example new leads arising once research is underway. As such it relies on the researcher's judgement to recognise and decide regarding whether or not to take such opportunities. Miles et al. (2013) note that choosing additional participants opportunistically can benefit inductive theory building. We consider that openness to the unexpected and potential new leads is important more widely within qualitative research, particularly within abductive approaches. In contrast, politically important purposive sampling relies on the researcher's judgement regarding anticipated politically sensitive issues and associated outcomes when deciding whether to include or exclude one or more prominent potential participants.

Snowball sampling is the first of two techniques where the researcher chooses participants from those who either volunteer or are volunteered to be part of the research (Table 28.1). It relies on existing participants to identify further potential participants, and so is considered particularly useful where the target population and thus potential participants are difficult to either physically locate or, alternatively, identify. Initially the researcher relies on her or his judgement to choose an initial participant. That participant identifies other participants from the same target population and supports the gaining of access. Each in turn identifies further potential participants who are similar to themselves, resulting in what is likely to be a homogenous sample (Lee, 1993). Our second volunteer technique, self-selection sampling, occurs when, in response to the research being publicised, one or more potential participants

self identify and volunteer to take part. Those who do are likely to have stronger feelings or opinions about the research and consider it important or interesting. Providing such potential participants are considered suitable, the researcher's judgement regarding which media (be it online or traditional) to use to advertise for potential participants will determine the characteristics of those likely to volunteer.

Haphazard sampling occurs when one or more participants are chosen without any obvious reasoning that relates to the research question, the most common form being convenience sampling. This involves the researcher in choosing participants because they are readily available or convenient to access. Although some research texts argue that using this form of selection, whilst saving money and effort, does so at the expense of data and credibility (Miles et al., 2013), we contend this may not necessarily be so. Where the target population of potential participants contains little variability, choosing one or more participants on the basis of convenience rather than some other form of non-probability sampling is unlikely to have a major impact (Saunders, 2012). In addition, a target population that may be 'convenient' to access, perhaps due to an existing relationship, may still meet other criteria judged more relevant to answering the research question.

THE CHALLENGE OF HOW MANY PARTICIPANTS WILL BE SUFFICIENT

Throughout this chapter we have been careful to refer to both a 'participant' (singular) and 'participants' (plural). This is because for some qualitative research questions one participant can be sufficient (Becker, 2012; Patton, 2015). The challenge of sufficient participants comprises two inter-related aspects. The first relates to the planning (design stage) of qualitative research, when it is often necessary to have some idea

regarding how many participants are likely to be needed to enable the research question to be answered. The second occurs during data collection and analysis and relates to the number actually being sufficient to both provide the depth and breadth of salient information to answer the research question and be credible to others. In general terms, the number considered sufficient therefore depends on a balance between the research purpose, saliency of data obtained, what is considered numerically credible by the researcher's community, and the researcher's epistemological and ontological positions (Saunders & Townsend, 2016).

Advice regarding our first aspect, how many participants are likely to be needed within qualitative research is, compared to that for quantitative research, limited. Some texts, emphasising the open-ended and often exploratory nature of qualitative research, argue that data collection should continue from further participants until saturation (Morse, 1994) or information redundancy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) is reached. Even putting aside arguments that saturation may not be an appropriate way of establishing sufficiency (discussed later), such advice is problematic when it is necessary to have an idea of the number of participants who are likely to need to be chosen at the design stage.

Few authors, and none we could find within business and management, offer empirically based advice regarding when saturation is likely to be reached. One of the most widely cited studies (Guest et al., 2006) draws on a study of 30 Nigerian and Ghanaian women with HIV, commenting that 6 to 12 interviews should be sufficient to reach saturation with a relatively homogenous population. Similar numbers are reported by Francis et al. (2010) and Marshall (1996) in studies of saturation using medical leaders, practitioners and patients, these ranging from 13 to 15. More generally, Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) advise the number should not be so small that it is difficult to obtain data saturation and yet not too large to make in-depth analysis

difficult. Kuzel (1992) notes the number required for saturation is likely to differ depending on whether the target population (and the participants to be chosen) is homogenous or heterogeneous, with others highlighting the number will also differ between research strategies. Morse (1994), for example, advises between 30 and 50 participants for ethnographic studies, whereas Creswell (2007) suggests between 20 and 30 participants for a Grounded Theory study.

Whilst some consider saturation to be a 'gold standard' for establishing whether the number of participants is sufficient in qualitative research (Guest et al., 2006, p. 60), others consider it inappropriate. They argue that where saturation is not reached, this means that the phenomenon has yet to be fully explored, not that findings are invalid (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). Choosing additional participants and collecting data until saturation is reached implies the number needs to be sufficient to reveal or illuminate key themes, implying a need for analytic generalisability. Yet this is not appropriate for research questions such as establishing whether something is possible, or providing a rich account of the particular (Baker & Edwards, 2012). For such research questions a single participant, carefully chosen, may well be sufficient (Merriam, 1995; Passerini, 2012). Others (for example, Baker & Edwards, 2012) note that different disciplinary communities have different norms regarding the number of participants considered sufficient for qualitative studies. Our own review of over 240 empirical articles using interviews in organisation and workplace studies revealed less than 4 per cent mentioned using data saturation (Saunders & Townsend, 2016).

More general advice regarding the likely number of participants regarded to be sufficient for qualitative research is also limited, consideration of the issue being buried away (Baker & Edwards, 2012). Summarised in Saunders (2012) as between 4 and 12 participants for homogenous and between 12 and 30 for heterogeneous groups, much of this advice

comprises opinions, albeit drawing on experience. This is surrounded by methodological and practical caveats alluding to differences between groups, different research strategies and complexities, and the research question. Whilst noting the impossibility of expressing precise numbers prior to inception, such advice also recognises a need to often provide an indication when planning. To this end, Adler and Adler (2012) note that whilst the number of participants can vary from 1 to a 100 or more, they advise between a dozen and 60 for a qualitative research project. This concurs with our own advice based upon our review of organisation and workplace published research practice (Saunders & Townsend, 2016). Drawing on what has been deemed acceptable by editors and reviewers, we suggest that when planning such research, initial estimates of 30 participants if analysing as a single group and 50 if analysing as multiple groups are likely to be credible. We also offer a broad overall norm of between 15 and 60 interview participants. We recognise that for some qualitative researchers the suggestion of such norms might be considered controversial. However, from our pragmatist philosophy, we consider such norms can be helpful providing they are considered as guidance offering insights rather than providing regulations to be followed. The actual number of participants will be dependent upon the research question, saliency of data and the researcher's epistemological and ontological positions. Consequently, a single qualitative interview can be sufficient and credible for some research purposes (Saunders & Townsend, 2016).

THE CHALLENGE OF REPORTING (AND JUSTIFYING) PARTICIPANT SELECTION

Much of the advice and guidance reviewed in the previous section emphasises a need for transparency by reporting and justifying participant numbers in qualitative research.

Although a few researchers, notably Janesick (2000), contend that a preoccupation with justifying method can detract from the story being told, the majority consider it important. They argue such reporting will help the sufficiency of participants and authenticity and credibility of the research to be evaluated (Curtis et al., 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), where appropriate allowing others to adopt the design as a basis for similar studies (Baker & Edwards, 2012). Such justification, it is argued, can take the form of data saturation, citing previous similar studies, or referring to expert opinion (Francis et al., 2010; Guest et al., 2006; Marshall et al., 2013).

Despite this perceived importance, two studies from School Psychology (Safman & Sobal, 2004) and Health Sciences (Collins et al., 2006) reveal only 60 per cent of research articles reviewed reported the number of participants, these rarely providing justification. In relation to information systems, Marshall et al. (2013) note that for those studies reporting the number of participants, justification was either by superficial reference to data saturation or omitted entirely. Furthermore, Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007, pp. 115–16) comment: 'many qualitative researchers seemingly select the size of their samples in an arbitrary fashion'.

Our own research (Saunders & Townsend, 2016) reveals, in relation to qualitative interviews, over 80 per cent of organisation and workplace researchers provided at least some indication of their number of participants, over three-quarters stating the precise number, as part of a more detailed description of participants' characteristics. Invariably for some, particularly ethnographic, studies it was not possible to state a precise number, although for these a detailed description of process was still offered as part of the method. However, only half of the organisation and workplace studies stating the number of participants provided some form of justification, all doing so either implicitly or explicitly by relating the number of participants chosen to the study purpose. Other (additional) forms

of justification, such as data saturation, citing expert opinion or previous research, were used rarely, being reported in fewer than 5 per cent of studies. This was not something we had anticipated, believing that researchers would justify the number of participants selected in some manner. Hence, we raise the need to both report and justify the number of participants as our fourth challenge, as yet partially unmet by many qualitative researchers within business and management research.

DISCUSSION

Within this chapter we have taken a processual view to highlighting challenges when choosing participants in qualitative research. We have focused our attention on four key challenges within the process: gaining access to data; choosing suitable participants (principally using non-probability sampling techniques); determining appropriate participant numbers; and reporting and justifying the participant selection. Qualitative research as an experience and as a means of understanding phenomena can be richly rewarding and informative. It does, however, present the researcher with a range of challenges, each of which can be overcome with planning, contingencies and flexibility from the research team. Researchers should set out at the start of their project 'planning the worst, yet all the while hoping and working for the best possible outcome' (McDonald et al., 2009, p. 134).

Gaining access can be a challenging process, but, importantly, it is also an on-going process. A range of informal and formal networks may play a role in gaining access and the researcher must tread warily, adhering to both institutional and professional standards of ethical research practice. Importantly, negotiating access is not a one-time activity. Researchers must continually negotiate access throughout the research period, recognising that maintaining strong relationships

can provide the researcher with the opportunity to return for additional data collection at a later stage.

Within business and management qualitative research we generally utilise non-probability sampling techniques. One consequence of this is that whilst some in a target population will have the opportunity to be selected, others will not. Although this means statistical generalisations cannot be drawn, such generalisations have never been an aim of qualitative research. Qualitative research allows us as researchers to dig deeply and understand business and management phenomena, purposive techniques tending to be the most widely used to choose participants (Miles et al., 2013). Yet non-probability sampling techniques are an area that those who oppose qualitative research may point to as a methodological weakness. Whilst such techniques are rigorous, those used need to be documented clearly.

A common question within the wider qualitative research community is 'how many interviews are enough?' (Baker & Edwards, 2012), yet answers to this common question are rare and often imprecise. This is the nature of the qualitative research process; and for some researchers the suggestion of an even broader overall norm might be considered controversial, or perhaps sacrilege. Yet, organisations which plan to commit resources to research projects will often seek an indication regarding the likely resources required. Hence, it is important that the researcher has a plan including an idea of the potential number of participants before they begin to collect data. However, in reviewing advice comprising both guidance and norms, we re-emphasise that these are derived from what has been deemed acceptable by others such as editors and reviewers (Saunders & Townsend, 2016). We also re-emphasise that the actual number of participants for a research study is dependent upon research purpose, saliency of data and the researcher's epistemological and ontological positions, and that for some purposes one interview can be sufficient.

When asked why articles are rejected, journal editors commonly point to problems with the method (Clark et al., 2006; Daft, 1995). Whilst clear description, more detailed explanation and justification can assist in this area, it may create a problem of space for the author. Qualitative researchers need to ensure there is an ample justification and explanation of the participants chosen without sacrificing the quality of the data presented.

Whilst many qualitative researchers appear to make sample size selections in an 'arbitrary fashion' (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007, p. 116), it is also possible that many plan very well based on published research. Methods sections of published journal articles offer little detail in terms of explaining and justifying the selection of participants (Saunders & Townsend, 2016). At best they tend to comprise general statements of process and limited details of participants when publishing. We are of the view that the qualitative research community needs to provide more. Acknowledging there are alternative arguments, we consider it crucial to know how data are collected and analysed as a means of, first, providing some greater credibility and integrity around the process for both scholars and practitioners, and second, providing tacit training for new and emerging scholars in the field. We suggest therefore that qualitative researchers should as a minimum provide a clear description of their participants; how and why they were selected and the number; and, of course, how they enable the research question to be answered.

CONCLUSION

Within this chapter we have outlined four challenges faced by qualitative researchers in business and management when choosing participants. The first of these was the challenge of gaining access to potential participants, which highlighted both organisational issues and pressures for methodological rigour. The second, the challenge of choosing

one or more suitable participants, highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of widely used non-probability sampling techniques. Our third challenge examined the question of how many participants will be sufficient for the research to be considered authentic and credible. We noted the variability in participant numbers likely to be considered credible, highlighting that this would depend on the research purpose, saliency of data collected and the researcher's epistemological and ontological assumptions. Our fourth challenge, reporting and justifying participant selection, emphasised the need, despite potential space constraints, to report research more clearly and more fully. Interwoven through these four challenges is the need to act ethically and ensure participants' rights are respected.

More research on understanding and explaining the reporting and justification of participant selection will allow better informed project planning, greater transparency of the research process and, overall, a better level of credibility and authenticity to qualitative research. Qualitative researchers in practice tend to use the expectations of the business and management community – previous experience, expert opinion and replication of previous studies – as justification for their research. We would encourage authors, whatever the basis of their decision-making, to meet our final challenge and report clearly the number of participants chosen, providing a reasoned justification for the decisions made throughout the data collection process.

REFERENCES

- Adler, P.A. and Adler, P. (2012). 'Expert Voices' in Baker, S.E. and Edwards, R. 'How many qualitative interviews are enough?' *National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper*, pp. 8–11. Available at <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/2273/> (Accessed 22 January 2015).
- Alvesson, M. and Ashcraft, K.L. (2012). 'Interviews'. In G. Symon and C. Cassell (eds)

- Qualitative Organizational Research: Core Methods and Current Challenges*. London: Sage, pp. 239–57.
- Arksey, H. and Knight, P. (1999). *Interviewing for Social Scientists*. London: Sage.
- Baker, R., Brick, M.J., Bates, N.A., Battaglia, M., Couper, M.P., Dever, J.A., Gile, K.J. and Tourangeau, R. (2013). 'Summary of the AAPOR Task Force Report on non-probability sampling', *Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology* 1(2), pp. 90–143.
- Baker, S.E. and Edwards, R. (2012). 'How many qualitative interviews are enough?' *National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper*. Available at <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/2273/> (Accessed 22 January 2015).
- Barnett, V. (2002). *Sample Surveys Principles and Methods* (3rd edition). Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Becker, H.S. (1998) *'Tricks of the Trade: How to Think about Your Research While You're Doing It'*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Becker, H.S. (2012). 'Expert voice'. In S.E. Baker and R. Edwards, 'How many qualitative interviews are enough?' *National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper*. Available at <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/2273/> (Accessed 22 January 2015).
- Bell, E. and Bryman, A. (2007). 'The ethics of management research: An exploratory content analysis', *British Journal of Management* 18(1), pp. 63–77.
- Brinkmann S and Kvale, S (2015). *Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Interviewing*. (3rd edition). London: Sage.
- Buchanan, D., Boddy, D. and McCalman, J. (2013 [1988]). 'Getting in, getting on, getting out and getting back', in A. Bryman (ed.) *Doing Research in Organisations*. London: Routledge Library Edition, pp. 53–67.
- Cachia, M and Millward, L. (2011). 'The telephone medium and semi-structured interviews: A complimentary fit', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management* 6(3), pp. 265–77.
- Clark, T., Floyd, S.W. and Wright, M. (2006). 'On the review process and journal development: Fatal flaws in development and deficiencies in analysis', *Journal of Management Studies* 43(3), pp. 655–64.
- Collins, K.M.T., Onwuegbuzie, A.J. and Jiao, Q.G. (2006). 'Prevalence of mixed methods sampling designs in social science research', *Evaluation and Research in Education* 19, pp. 83–101.
- Corbin, J. and Strauss, A. (2015). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (4th edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (2nd edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Curtis, S., Gesler, W., Smith, G. and Washburn, S. (2000). 'Approaches to sampling and case selection in qualitative research: Examples in the geography of health', *Social Science and Medicine* 50, pp. 1001–14.
- Daft, R.L. (1995). 'Why I recommend your manuscript be rejected and what you can do about it'. In L.L. Cummings and P.J. Frost (eds) *Publishing in the Organizational Sciences* (2nd edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 164–82.
- Dewey, J. (1997 [1908]). *How We Think*. New York: Dover.
- Eby, L.T., Hurst, C.S. and Butts, M.M. (2009). 'Qualitative research: The redheaded stepchild in organisational and social science research'. In C.E. Lance and R.J. Vandenberg (eds) *Statistical and Methodological Myths and Urban Legends: Doctrine, Verity and Fable in Organisational and Social Sciences*. New York: Routledge, pp. 219–46.
- Ellem, B. (2009). 'Drinking with Dessie: Research, mines, and life in the Pilbara'. In K. Townsend and J. Burgess (eds) *Method in the Madness: Research Stories You Won't Read in Textbooks*. Oxford, UK: Chandos Publishing, pp. 39–51.
- Francis, J.J., Johnston, M., Robertson, C., Glidewell, L., Entwistle, V., Eccles, M. and Grimshaw, M. (2010). 'What is an adequate sample size? Operationalizing data saturation for theory-based studies', *Psychology and Health*, 25, pp. 1229–45.
- Groves, R.M. and Couper, M. (1998). *Non-response in Household Interview Surveys*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Groves, R.M., Singer, E. and Corning, A. (2000). 'Leverage-saliency theory of survey participation: Description and an illustration', *Public Opinion Quarterly* 64, pp. 299–308.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A. and Johnson, L. (2006). 'How many interviews are enough?' *Field Methods* 18, pp. 59–82.

- Hodgkinson, G.P., Herriot, P. and Anderson, N. (2001). 'Re-aligning the stakeholders in management research: Lessons from industrial, work and organizational psychology', *British Journal of Management* 12, Special Issue, pp. 41–8.
- Janesick, V.J. (2000). 'The choreography of qualitative research design'. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 379–99.
- Johnson, P., Buehring, A., Cassell, C. and Symon, G. (2006). 'Evaluating qualitative management research: Towards a contingent criteriology', *International Journal of Management Reviews* 8(3), pp. 131–56.
- Kervin, J.B. (1999). *Methods for Business Research* (2nd edition). New York: HarperCollins.
- Kuzel, A. (1992). 'Sampling in qualitative inquiry'. In B. Crabtree and W. Miller (eds) *Doing Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, pp. 31–44.
- Lee, R. (1993). *Doing Research on Sensitive Topics*. London: Sage.
- Lincoln, Y. and Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Marshall, B., Cardon, P., Poddar, A. and Fontenot, R. (2013). 'Does sample size matter in qualitative research: A review of qualitative interviews in IS research', *Journal of Computer Information Systems* 54, pp. 11–22.
- Marshall, C. and Rossman, G.B. (2011). *Designing Qualitative Research* (5th edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Marshall, M.N. (1996). 'Sampling for qualitative research', *Family Practice* 13, pp. 522–5.
- Maynard, D.W., Freese, J. and Schaeffer, N.C. (2010). 'Calling for participation: Requests, blocking moves and rational (inter)action in survey introductions', *American Sociological Review* 75(5), pp. 791–814.
- McDonald, P., Townsend, K. and Waterhouse, J. (2009). 'Wrong way – go back! Negotiating access in industry-based research'. In K. Townsend and J. Burgess (eds) *Method in the Madness: Research Stories You Won't Read in Textbooks*. Oxford, UK: Chandos Publishing, pp. 119–34.
- Merriam, S.B. (1995). 'What can you tell me from an N of 1? Issues of validity and reliability on qualitative research', *PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning* 4, pp. 51–60.
- Miles, M.B., Huberman, A.M. and Saldana, J. (2013). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (3rd edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Morse, J. (1994). 'Designing funded qualitative research'. In N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds) *Handbook for Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 220–35.
- Myers, M.D. (2013). *Qualitative Research in Business and Management*. London: Sage.
- Nastasi, B.K., Hitchcock, J.H. and Brown, L.M. (2010). 'An inclusive framework for conceptualizing mixed methods design typologies'. In C. Teddlie and A. Tashakkori (eds) *Sage Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioural Research* (2nd edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 305–38.
- Okumus, F., Altinay, L. and Roper, A. (2007). 'Gaining access for research: Reflections from experience', *Annals of Tourism Research* 34(1), pp. 7–26.
- Onwuegbuzie, A.J. and Leech, N.L. (2005). 'Taking the "Q" out of research: Teaching research methodology courses without the divide between quantitative and qualitative paradigms', *Quality and Quantity* 39, pp. 267–96.
- Onwuegbuzie, A.J. and Leech, N.L. (2007). 'A call for qualitative power analyses', *Quality & Quantity*, 4, pp. 105–21.
- O'Reilly, M. and Parker, N. (2013). 'Unsatisfactory saturation: A critical exploration of the notion of saturated sample sizes in qualitative research', *Qualitative Research* 13, pp. 190–7.
- Passerini, L. (2012). 'Expert voice'. In S.E. Baker and R. Edwards (eds) *How Many Qualitative Interviews Are Enough?* National Centre for Research Methods Review Discussion Paper, pp. 32–3. Retrieved from <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/2273/> (Accessed 22 January 2016).
- Patton, M.Q. (2015). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Price, R. and Townsend, K. (2009). 'Looking through the haze of discontent: Smokers as a data source'. In K. Townsend and J. Burgess (eds) *Method in the Madness: Research Stories You Won't Read in Textbooks*. Oxford, UK: Chandos Publishing, pp. 83–94.
- Punch, M. (1986). *The Politics and Ethics of Fieldwork*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

- Robinson, O.C. (2014). 'Sampling in interview based qualitative research: A theoretical and practical guide', *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 11(1), pp. 25–41.
- Robson, C. (2011). *Real World Research* (3rd edition). Chichester: Wiley.
- Safman, R.M. and Sobal, J. (2004). 'Qualitative sample extensiveness in health education research', *Health Education and Behavior* 31, pp. 9–21.
- Saunders, M.N.K. (2012). 'Choosing research participants'. In G. Symon and C. Cassell (eds) *Qualitative Organizational Research*. London: Sage, pp. 35–52.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2016). *Research Methods for Business Students* (7th edition). Harlow, UK: Pearson.
- Saunders, M.N.K. and Townsend, K. (2016). 'Reporting and justifying the number of participants in organisation and workplace research', *British Journal of Management* 27(4), pp. 836–52.
- Van De Ven, A.H. and Johnson, P.E. (2006). 'Knowledge for theory and practice', *Academy of Management Review* 31(4), pp. 802–21.
- Walford, G. (2001). *Doing Qualitative Educational Research. A Personal Guide to the Research Process*. London: Continuum.
- Wensley, R. (2011). 'Seeking relevance in management research'. In C. Cassell and B. Lee (eds) *Challenges and Controversies in Management Research*. New York: Routledge, pp. 258–74.
- Wicks, A.C. and Freeman, R.E. (1998). 'Organization studies and the new pragmatism: Positivism, anti-positivism, and the search for ethics', *Organization Science* 9(2), pp. 123–40.

Qualitative Research across Boundaries: Indigenization, Glocalization or Creolization?¹

Giampietro Gobo

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary qualitative research is questioned by non-academic and/or non-Western epistemologies, although far less so than quantitative methods. The challenge directly concerns the tacit cultural foundations of traditional qualitative research, which still embodies (in its methods) an ethnocentric, and sometimes colonial, attitude.

Due to the initial European colonization (see Gobo, 2011), and later the Anglophone domination during the twentieth century (see Alasuutari, 2004; Fielding 2014; Hsiung 2012; Ryen 2011), worldwide qualitative methodology is almost entirely constituted by research methods (focus group, in-depth interview, ethnography, visual methods, discourse and conversation analysis, etc.) invented by the Western middle-class academic culture.

This particular local/indigenous, methodological culture was then globalized, becoming dominant in almost all forms of inquiry

around the world. This phenomenon led to a sort of ‘methodological genocide’ of non-Anglophone qualitative research traditions: many local research traditions (e.g. in Austria, Norway, Italy and so on) and their outcomes (not translated into English) disappeared and were erased from local memories and methodological textbooks. However, the paradox is that many contemporary methodological articles are ‘reinventing the wheel’, that is, re-stating what was already found 80–90 years ago by these deleted local research traditions.

Though already global, conventional qualitative research methods still embody the Western indigenous knowledge from which they originated, and they share the limits of globalization evident in many other fields, from economy to politics, from marketing to culture and social life. In fact, when exported and applied in marginal Western cultures (to which poorly educated people, lower classes, cultural peripheral communities, and so on, belong), to migrants

(see Flick & Röhnisch, 2014), Afro-American communities (see McDougal III, 2014), and obviously in non-Western research contexts (Ryen, 2000), these research methods run into cultural difficulties.

For this reason, a growing need to find post-colonial methodologies and non-ethnocentric methods, and to develop culturally flexible, conventional, qualitative research methods, is challenging contemporary research procedures and practices. Researchers wanting to pursue this alternative can choose from at least three methodological directions: indigenization, glocalization or creolization.

After a description of some challenging non-Western epistemologies and a review of some cultural difficulties concerning the main traditional qualitative methods, the three methodological directions will be scrutinized in regard to their advantages and intrinsic limitations. The first direction (indigenous methodologies) will be considered out of date because the local/indigenous no longer exist after the glocalization processes that have invested the entire world (Robertson, 2013). The remaining alternatives to the colonial and ethnocentric Western conventional qualitative research methods are glocalization and creolization. Both are useful, even if creolization seems to be the alternative that is more respectful of cultural traditions, methodologically flexible and fruitful.

CULTURAL DIFFICULTIES WITH QUALITATIVE METHODS

Cross-cultural difficulties with survey and quantitative methods have already been extensively described in the literature (see Gobo (2011) for a review). Less attention has been paid to cultural difficulties with qualitative methods. Because the latter are more flexible than the former, they have been widely considered less ethnocentric. This is not the case. They still embody some common-sense assumptions, tacit conceptions or ideologies

belonging to the societies in which they arose. Hence, they encapsulate specific epistemologies which conflict with the epistemologies in use among the participants investigated. In what follows, several examples taken from different non-Western contexts will be presented in order to describe the limitations of traditional qualitative methods.

Buddhist Epistemology in Management Research: Problems with Interviews in Taiwan

The context of the first example is Taiwan, a small country culturally ruled by Buddhist principles.

Buddhist epistemology is based on the eightfold noble path, the middle path and different (from the West) conceptions about cause–condition–effect, space (context) and time (see Shen & Midgley, 2007). These assumptions shape the ways in which phenomena are understood. For example, ‘problem avoidance’ in management studies is often described by Western psychologists as a pathology from which individuals suffer, and which has a neurotic impact on entire organizations (Shen & Midgley, 2015, p. 171). By contrast, in Taiwan, problem avoidance is rarely labelled ‘pathological’. Rather, if it is mentioned at all, it is seen as being part of the search for organizational harmony that is typical of some Eastern cultures (Shen & Midgley, 2007). Organizational harmony is usually discussed in entirely positive terms by Eastern writers.

If, in this context, the intention is to use the (Western) interview method (see Gobo (2011) for a detailed description of the tacit knowledge and communicative skills entailed by it), some difficulties can be easily predicted. In fact:

[t]he culture in Taiwan encourages a deep respect for age, authority and organizational harmony ... While surreptitious sabotage is possible (Ho, 1997), the open voicing of disagreement is usually viewed

as threatening harmony, which should be avoided. Even the open recognition of problems is generally avoided for fear that pointing to a problem could be construed as blaming someone. (Shen & Midgley, 2015, p. 188)

Consequently, Shen and Midgley recall that 'it was difficult for individuals to mention problems or issues because they feared that they would be seen as challenging the hierarchy, or threatening the coherence of the organization' (2015, p. 188).

Epistemologies of the South: The Mapuche People and the Truth as Opinion

Some Latin American communities share basic cultural beliefs quite different from the North American (Western) ones. In order to advocate the former, De Sousa Santos (2014) urges abandonment of the hegemonic Western-centric epistemologies and meaning systems which are 'cannibalizing' the epistemologies of the South. The latter show how basic schemas of Western thought (on which qualitative methods are based) clash with the reasoning of Latin American participants.

An example of the latter is provided by the Mapuche. González Gálvez (2015) spent 15 months of fieldwork with rural Mapuche people in Elicura, a small valley in southern Chile. He found that they believe in 'the singularity of personal experience', which is strongly connected to the conception of people as unique entities. This implies a specific idea of reality:

[i]f, in Foucault (1970) truth appears as something beyond persons and univocal, to which each person has the same access, for the rural Mapuche, who lack that principle, truth appears as something strictly personal, generally formed by multiple lines of ongoing personal experience. Importantly, these lines are not necessarily expected to converge. If that occurs, it would be due to an overlapping of experiences and/or persons (similitude of being), and not necessarily because there is something 'out there' allowing this to be the case. (González Gálvez, 2015, p. 154)

As Alberto, a native Mapuche, said to the author: 'what you think is what you think, and nobody can mess with that. Each person owns his thoughts'. What each person experiences is unique, and no other person can replicate it. Consequently, the Mapuche people claim that the very process of being-in-the-world, developed by each person, forms reality. So they believe in the appearance of the *witranalwe* (the spirit of a deceased human being like a brother or a son).

However, the rural Mapuche assumption of personal experience's truthfulness implies an ontological gap that cannot be explained relativistically, but is instead a challenge to any kind of external ontology. Far from subjectivism and objectivism, it is radically respectful of the singularity and autonomy of persons.

Chinese Epistemology: Difficulties with Interviews, Fieldnotes, Coding, Discourse and Conversation Analysis

Traditional qualitative research methods take for granted the basic cognitive procedures on which they are based. However, these interpretative procedures are closely bound up with the features of Western thought. This emerges only through comparison with other epistemologies, like the Chinese one.

Traditional social science research in China has 'mainly been speculative without strict requirements for empirical data from the field or a rigorous procedure. It used philosophic contemplation and logic deduction for theory production and verification' (Chen, 2015, p. 1). In spite of the various indigenous efforts by Chinese scholars, qualitative research in China is, by and large, a Western-imported product (Chen, 2015). And, as such, traditional qualitative research is constantly challenged by the main features of Chinese epistemology.

Holistic thinking versus analytic thinking

Chinese scholars have inherited a cultural way to see the world as hazily, holistically and aesthetically beautiful. With the ‘unity between nature and the human’ doctrine, Chinese people usually see the world in unitary manner: ‘unlike the atomized world view such as the Christian or the scientific tradition in the West (Hoban, 2002), Chinese holistic view sees everything as interrelated, and nothing is in isolation from each other’ (Chen, 2015). The Western qualitative research mainstream requires analyses that disaggregate data and examine each word, phrase and sentence meticulously. This appears to be an excessively ‘hairsplitting’, ‘dissecting’ and ‘destructive’ analysis, because the doctrine of mean and harmony is neither clear-cut nor fixed. This manner of thinking is especially evident in Taoism, which believes that Tao (the Way) has no name and that classification is meaningless because haves and have-nots are constantly changing into each other, like yin and yang: ‘this may explain why some of our students are not used to the idea of reflexivity, which injects the researcher as an object for meticulous scrutiny’ (Chen, 2015, p. 8). Consequently, quite a number of the students found themselves unable to adapt to the overly analytic style of qualitative research. Some said that they found it very hard to cut texts into pieces and label them with codes, categories, properties and dimensions, ‘because it has lost the beauty of the whole, the haziness and the poetic, which we Chinese people cherish most’ (Chen, 2015, p. 7).

Imagery thinking versus conceptual thinking

In taking fieldnotes, some students preferred to use literary language to describe a scene: for example: ‘A man as tall as a horse came into the dining hall with a girl, who was hanging on his arm as a little bird rests upon

a man’ (Chen, 2015, p. 8). They thought that this kind of metaphorical language was better able to capture the spirit of the scene with aesthetic beauty than the drier, factual, concrete descriptions (required by Western qualitative research tradition) which can only show the appearance of people.

Moral dimension

Besides being holistic, knowledge in the Chinese cultural tradition is also value-laden with a moral bent. It is very different from the Western tradition of seeking objective understanding from the outside. Rather, it is mostly inward looking. In the Chinese language, the meaning of ‘knowing’ refers not only to perception and comprehension but also to moral conscience. Knowledge is imbued with morality, the highest good, in order to perfect oneself through constant introspection for the betterment of one’s family, one’s nation and the world.

Action orientation and concrete thinking versus abstract thinking

According to the Chinese cultural tradition, knowledge is both understanding of the world and action to change the world for the better.

The action orientation of knowledge is illustrated in such well-known doctrines as the ‘Unity of Knowing and Doing’. Knowing and doing are not divorced from each other. Knowing is the beginning of doing, and doing is the fulfilment of knowing.²

Informant consent

Because Chinese culture attaches great importance to personal relations, some protocols that may work in the law-governed Western society are not applicable in China. For example, the ‘informed consent’ form is considered an oddity in Chinese society. It would be contrary to common sense to ask a participant for a signature while the researcher should take full responsibility. Faced with the form, the participant would be scared away, thinking that s/he was making a life-or-death

commitment with unknown consequences. Indeed, Chen states: 'no university in China has required such a form yet' (2015, p. 7).³

Finally, unlike in mainstream Western methodology, some students said:

[t]he significance of researching a small sample is not to generalize its findings to a large population, but to impact the readers, to move them. It's like the Buddhist saying, 'One moon reflected in thousands of rivers; so long as there is water in a thousand rivers, there are a thousand moons'. (Chen, 2015, p. 8)

Difficulties with Focus Groups in Thailand and Visual Methods in Mexico

Eastern and Southern epistemologies challenge the cognitive processes at the basis of traditional (Western) qualitative research methods. The following examples, taken from Thai, Mexican and Guatemalan research contexts, show how focus groups and visual methods are not culturally neutral techniques, but instead closely related with the societies in which they were invented.

Tacitly embedded in the focus group method, invented in the US (during the Second World War) jointly by a European (Paul F. Lazarsfeld) and an American (Robert K. Merton), are specific individualistic ideas about ordinary social relations and society: it should be democratic; people are free to express and share their opinions; individual and personal beliefs are respected; and so on. But how many democratic societies exist in the world? Are focus groups possible in authoritarian or non-democratic societies? Can this American method be exported without its original social and cultural conditions?

In regard to her field experience in Thailand, Chareerat Intarachamnong writes:

[It is] difficult to achieve core concept of focus groups in Thai environments ... The researcher has difficulty in creating free situations of discussion. The barrier is national traits/characters (existing

also in other Eastern societies). The 'Kreng jai'⁴ and/or 'Seniority' (respect for elderly people) values make every participant not fully release ideas to the group, because they feel like they are 'showing off'. If a participant asserts ideas contrary to the group, the others feel that s/he is aggressive or discrediting other participants. Especially if this happens with senior people, it can damage the atmosphere. This preaches to the essence of Thai society. I've found this even for marketing focus groups, which situation turns into a group interview instead of a focus group, because people are shy to express ideas. (personal communication, 13 January 2016)

Also, photographing and filming people (i.e. visual methods) are often awkward issues among some populations (e.g. in some Maya villages in Chiapas – Mexico or in Guatemala). As every travel guide warns, photographs and filming are not allowed due to the belief that they will capture the participants' soul. If the researcher leaves the village with the photograph, then the participant's soul goes with them. Hence, there also exists a colonial methodology legacy within visual methods.

Hawaiian Epistemology: Expanding Western Ideas of Empiricism

In a very interesting essay, Aluli-Meyer (2008) has outlined the Hawaiian epistemology. In it, spirituality and knowing are intertwined. Hence, the understanding of a social phenomenon, situation or action is based on a range of senses wider than the five bodily ones of empiricism (vision, hearing, touch, taste and smell); other bodily and spiritual senses are included in order fully to understand the phenomenon under study. As the author explains,

the separation of mind from body is not found in a Hawaiian worldview ... intelligence and knowledge are embedded at the core of our bodies – the stomach or *na'au* ... the site both for feeling and thinking ... *Our mind is our body. Our body is our mind.* And both connect to the spiritual act of knowledge acquisition. (p. 223)

There is a different conception of action and its motives in Hawaiian epistemology:

Hawaiians at one time believed in the causative agency of intention. *Thought creates*. This is why it was seen as negative to even think of hitting a child. Negative thoughts then had negative consequences ... the idea that thought creates and intentions shape the observable world ... is now recognized and discussed in depth by indigenous scholars, quantum physicists, mothers, and social scientists ... Our thoughts create reality. (p. 222)

INTERSECTIONALITY AND SITUATIONALITY

The examples reported should be contextualized and not generalized. In other words, not all Taiwanese share, follow or are affected in the same ways by Buddhist principles; not all Chinese people have difficulties with analytical reasoning; not all people living in Chiapas think badly about photography and video; and so on.

'Intersectionality' is a notion first developed in 1989 by the American civil rights activist and leading proponent of critical race theory, Kimberlé W. Crenshaw. It is based on the idea that differences and discriminations overlap with or *intersect* with social identities in different ways: various biological, social and cultural categories, such as gender, race, class, sexual orientation, religion, age, nationality and other sectarian dimensions of identity, often simultaneously interact at diverse levels. This means that there is no singular experience of an identity. Consequently, the most important role is played by the participants' *position* within the sets of power: this position is defined and re-negotiated by multiple axes of differentiation and discrimination.

For example, a white woman can be discriminated against when she relates with white men; however, in a work context where white people are dominant, she can have several advantages compared to a black woman employee. Nevertheless, the white woman

may be discriminated against if she works in an organization run by black people. Political movements headed by black women contested the idea that women form a homogeneous category with essentially the same life experiences. This argument arose from the realization that white middle-class women do not represent the feminist movement as a whole (Davis, 1983). Feminists recognized that the kinds of oppression experienced by white middle-class women are different from those suffered by black, poor or disabled women. They consequently examined how gender, race and class combine to 'determine the female destiny' (hooks, 1984). Their conclusion was that people are subject to diverse forms of subordination within society (McCall, 2005) and the social setting (the situation) plays the main role in producing the discrimination.

INDIGENOUS METHODS: DO IT BETTER?

This brief review of difficulties encountered by traditional (Western) qualitative research methods underlines that these globalized qualitative methods should be amended. A researcher who wants to take up this challenge has three main options: indigenization, glocalization or creolization. Let us start with the first one.

During the past 15 years, awareness of the need to decolonize methodology has become intense. Since the pioneering work of Deloria (1969) and especially since the watershed publication of Smith (1999), the frame of social justice methodology has been growing among researchers seeking actively to recognize the injustices of the past and present in research practices (Evans et al., 2009; Nicholls, 2009). Indigenous methodologies (IM) and participatory action research (PAR) have been presented as ways to overcome methodological colonialism, as kinds of research by and for indigenous peoples using

techniques and methods drawn from the traditions of those peoples.

Kaupapa Māori

The most systematic model is *Kaupapa Māori Research*, an aboriginal research pattern theorized by Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Leonie Pihama, Taina Pohatu, Russell Bishop, Kuni Jenkins, Cheryl Smith and others (see www.rangahau.co.nz/about/). *Kaupapa* means different things simultaneously: philosophy, principle, basis, theme, topic, project, plan and proposal. There are eight main methodological principles of Kaupapa Māori: self-determination (*Tino Rangatiratanga*), cultural aspiration (*Taonga Tuku Iho*), culturally preferred pedagogy (*Ako Māori*), socio-economic mediation (*Kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kainga*), extended family structure (*Whānau*), collective philosophy (*Kaupapa*), treaty of Waitangi (*Te Tiriti o Waitangi*) and growing respectful relationships (*Ata*). These principles are inspired by six main ethical values: *Aroha* (respect), *Kānohi Kitea* (meeting with people face to face), *Manaaki Tangata* (collaboration and reciprocity), *Mana* (caring), *Māhaki* (sharing knowledge) and *Tikanga* (guidelines on what is 'right').

These methodological principles and ethical values are very interesting and informative. Smith (2005) presents *Kaupapa Māori* as opposed to *indigenous research*, because the former is transformative and serves as a model of social change and transformation that privileges *Māori* knowledge, aspirations, empowerment and emancipation. By contrast, *indigenous research* is merely a cognitive and naturalistic enterprise.

However, many of the *Kaupapa Māori* concepts are to be found also in feminist, postmodernist and transformative (action research) methodological approaches developed in the 1980s and 1990s by (mainly) Anglophone scholars.⁵ What is it in *Kaupapa Māori* that cannot be found in those Western

qualitative approaches? The disappointment increases when we pass from the Māori methodology to its methods, because *Kaupapa Māori* 'uses a number of quantitative and qualitative research methods that are also commonly used within other methodologies' (www.rangahau.co.nz/method/). In its 'exemplar' (reported in www.rangahau.co.nz/exemplar/), research on a project on the 'Historical and Contemporary Understandings and Expressions of Māori Sexuality' was conducted with focus groups and 20 interviews. In other words, specific Māori research methods do not exist, but 'only' adaptations of Western/colonial research methods to the Māori cultural and social context, to the principles of *Kaupapa Māori* research, and to the Māori participants' epistemology.

The Mmogo-Method™

Different is the case of 'Mmogo', a Setswana word denoting interpersonal relatedness, co-ownership, togetherness, co-construction and/or interpersonal threads (Roos, 2008). The *Mmogo-Method™* is a projective visual data-gathering method. It consists of clay, beads, straws and grass sticks manipulated into three-dimensional shapes by participants in order to produce associations related to their personal and collective experiences (see Figure 29.1). Through an open-ended research question, the researcher invites the participants to visually express their experience of a specific subject. This is followed by a collective discussion of their visual presentations. The *Mmogo-Method™* was formalized and patented by Vera Roos, a white Afrikaans researcher who developed it (in southern African contexts) from the observation that when conducting research in cross-cultural environments, traditional data collection methods such as questionnaires are limited in the desired data that they produce. Similarly, interviews and focus groups deliver little to no rich data in research that strives to discern the experiences, feelings

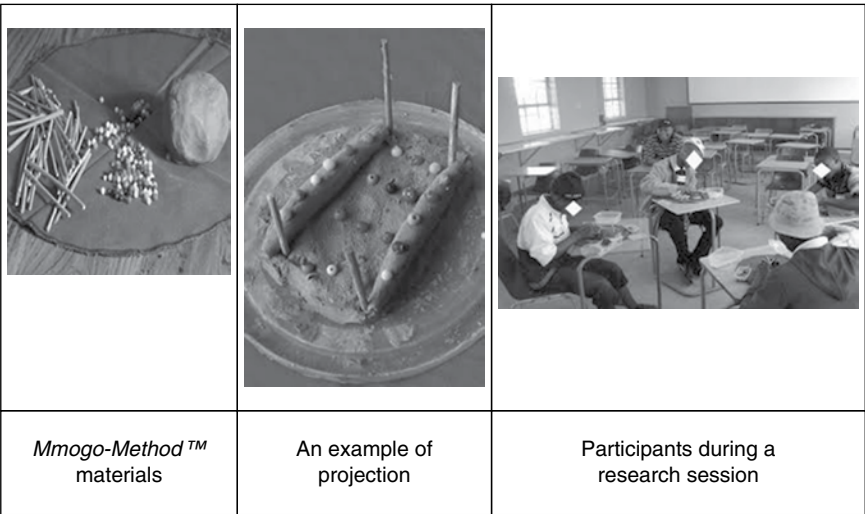


Figure 29.1 The *Mmogo-Method*TM

and perceptions of participants of which they themselves may not be aware or which may be hard to verbalize.

The *Mmogo-Method*TM is a rare case of an indigenous method. Another exception is *Dingxing Yanjiu* (investigative research), an approach distinct from qualitative and quantitative approaches, with Chinese socialist characteristics, and practised by former Chairman Ma Zedong and others before and after the ‘liberation’ in 1949 (see Hsiung, 2015). It is quite different from typical qualitative research because it has a very strong political agenda with predetermined assumptions, while qualitative research is more of a naturalistic inquiry, and also because traditional qualitative research was introduced into China only in the 1990s.

**INDIGENOUS METHODOLOGIES
WITHOUT INDIGENOUS METHODS:
WHY THIS?**

Apart from these exceptions (as far as I know), most of the literature on IM gives a

great deal of space to their epistemological assumptions (see a collection of them in Denzin et al., 2008), but not very much to technical proposals, which should be markedly different from the dominant colonial methods. Also, the increasing number of Western qualitative researchers (working with or within NGOs, engaged in action research and intervention projects), and the related growing literature on how to create connections and social capital in order to succeed in data collection (see Boggiano et al., 2015 for Vietnam) or be accepted as an indigenous insider by the participants (see Suwankhong & Liamputtong, 2015 for Thailand and Australia), propose doubtless useful suggestions, tips and recommendations for postcolonial fieldwork. However, in the end, these IM rarely convey technical innovations (Travers, 2009) and still heavily use colonial and ethnocentric methods in their research. Why is this so?

First, scholars who advocate and promote IM conduct quite limited discussion on specific methods, because they believe that many of the traditional qualitative methods could ‘work well with research involving

indigenous people' (Schneider & Kayseas, here Vol. 2, Chapter 9). In other words, the endeavour to indigenize qualitative research methods ends up with slight adaptations or minor revisions of existing Western qualitative methods. This minimalist perspective (which resembles more what I consider to be glocalization – see below – than indigenization) is proposed, for example, by Kovach when she states that 'indigenous methodologies and qualitative research at best form an insider/outsider relationship' (2009, p. 31). In other words, indigenous research methods exist both 'inside' and 'outside' traditional qualitative research methodologies. Following Kovach, what pass as IM are only traditional qualitative methods based on story-gathering methods (like the talking circle and/or research sharing circle, which gives everyone a chance to speak uninterruptedly, case method, narrative research and certain ethnographic interview methods). Also according to Chilisa (2012, pp. 31 and 230), even questionnaires and surveys can be adapted to an indigenous methodology, re-phrasing questions and terminologies in order to match the participants' knowledge systems, languages and experiences. However, this was precisely the interactional and interviewer-centred survey already proposed by the American surveyist Rensis Likert in the 1930s (see Gobo & Mauceri, 2014).

This is rather paradoxical, because a culture is usually recognized as being local or indigenous when it produces something specific and unique: a special cuisine (see Miller, 2008), a particular music, an unusual ceremony or distinct forms of knowledge (epistemologies). Consequently, it should also produce specific knowledge practices and research methods, as happened in medicine when specific epistemologies and worldviews produced specific approaches and methods which embodied specific local cultural features: homeopathy (Germany), naturopathy (Scotland and Germany), chiropractic (Canada), osteopathy (US), traditional

Chinese (China), anthroposophy (German), Ayurveda (India) and Tibetan (Tibet).

A second explanation of why non-Western epistemologies are rather fruitless in regard to methodological innovation has been put forward by Denise Gastaldo (University of Toronto), referring to Latin America:

It's my impression that in places where there is so much to be done, people don't spend much time thinking about methods, which are seen as 'just a tool'. Also, I believe French scholarship has been very influential in Brazil – ideas matter; methods are for North Americans ... there are 'indigenous' methods, but people don't realize they are local. I would say the whole tradition of PAR following Freire's cultural circles (and Fals Borda's work), Theater of the Oppressed,⁶ etc. are seen as a mix of intervention and research, which many times are not clearly understood historically (e.g. many think of PAR as a North American invention). Colonization is very strong. A lot of methodologies are considered rigorous because they are Anglo-American. (personal communication 23 January 2016)

What Is by Now Local?

What Is by Now Indigenous?

A third (complementary) explanation concerns the disappearance in the contemporary age of local. Hence perhaps impossible today is the survival of solely indigenous thought, of exclusively local practices (including research). It was not always so. Certainly active in the past were non-Western secular forms of investigation into the thoughts of people, their behaviours, opinions and feelings. For example, we can find a prototype of mystery shopping⁷ in personal investigations by the caliph Harun al-Rashid, belonging to the Abbasid dynasty that reigned from 785 to 809 in Baghdad (at that time one of the biggest and most prosperous cities in the world). He was a master of disguise able to masquerade as a merchant, a fisherman, a buffoon, etc. in order to meet and listen to his people in a way not mediated (affected) by his authority. Peter the Great (1682–1725) did likewise. Motivated by the intention to modernize Russia and make it the greatest power

in Eastern Europe, he chose to disguise himself to observe new techniques in both military and administrative organization. He travelled in disguise, especially in England and Ireland, at that time very advanced countries in terms of their Navy.

The same applies to other non-Western methods like the ‘compassionate approach’, ‘mindfulness or contemplation methods’ and ‘Buddhist meditation’, which have recently attracted scholars in the fields of neuroscience (Varela & Shear 1999), social problems (Sivaraksa et al., 1999), higher education (Galtung, 1999) and medical education (Remen, 1999), generating interesting methods and techniques (Giorgino, 2015). They could indeed represent opportunities to decolonize methodology.

However, the local seems to disappear in favour of glocalization. The latter raises some still unanswered questions such as: Who are the indigenous? Who is not indigenous? Who can speak on behalf of indigenous peoples and communities? Do pure indigenes still exist? Is indigeness a fixed identity or an intersectional one? What is authentic (the anthropological reflection on the politics of authenticity is wide)? What is more important, the quality of research or its ethnicity/indigeneity (see Atkinson & Ryen, 2016)?

In her discussion of research ethics and the Confucian worldview, the Chinese educationist Lee (2014) enquires whether an East–West polarization is really necessary. She suggests a middle way. In management studies, Indian Mathur (2014), instead of rejecting Western research, proposes a variety of inquiry approaches, and Atal (2014), an Indian sociologist, stresses the need to make exogenous elements suit local requirements, which strongly recalls the concept of ‘glocalization’. It seems important to avoid iconoclastic attitudes to Western research methods, seen as the devil compared to the goodness of the indigenous ones. As Chen (2015, p. 2) writes:

[q]uantitative research was first introduced into China in the early 1900s to assess urban poverty

and the experiences of the underprivileged as a critique to traditional elite knowledge (Chiang, 2001, quoted from Hsiung, 2015, p. 89; Lam, 2011, quoted from Hsiung, 2015, p. 89). After 1949, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were severely criticized for their imperialist connections and urban-centered bourgeois orientation (Hsiung, 2015, p. 89). In the late 1980s with the open-door policy, quantitative approach was reintroduced into China as ‘scientific’ and ‘objective’. Such ‘positivist’ research was at first almost a refuge or a liberating force for a group of intellectuals who had suffered hugely under bruising political movements that had subjected social sciences to ideological purposes. (R. Hayhoe, personal communication, 15 March 2015)

Glocalization

Roudometof (2015a) has well clarified the different interpretations of the term ‘glocalization’. Robertson (1992, p. 173) first introduced the concept of ‘glocalization’ into the social-scientific discourse. Thereafter, he refined it in order to respond to his critics (e.g. Radhakrishnan, 2010; Ritzer, 2003). While accepting some criticism, in his monist perspective, Robertson (2013) stated that today only *glocal* exists (no longer either *global* or *local*). The *glocal* is the final outcome of the historically long struggle between the global and the local in which both lost. According to Robertson, contrary to the general uptake view, in the end globalization does not produce uniformity (even if this was its original colonial aim), but differences and fragmentation of the world into a multitude of *glocal* realities, although they have the mould of global. Like the Hindu deities, they have essence and multiple realities. Today glocalization is (the result of the failure of) globalization, which has lost its hegemonic project. With a different emphasis, Alexander (2003) sees glocalization as a globalization refracted through the local. In terms of the metaphor of refraction,

the local is not annihilated or absorbed or destroyed by globalization but, rather, operates

sybiotically with globalization and shapes the telos or end state ... The result is heterogeneity (e.g. pop music or organizational technique or religion, and so on). Glocality is defined as experiencing the global locally or through local lenses (which can include local power relations, geopolitical and geographical factors, cultural distinctiveness, and so on). (Roudometof (2015a, p. 11)

According to Meyrowitz, ‘we now live in “glocalities”’. Each glocality is unique in many ways, and yet each is also influenced by global trends and global consciousness’ (2005, p. 23, quoted by Roudometof, 2015a, p. 11).

Also Ritzer (2003) agrees that pure global and pure local no longer exist. Perhaps (conventional) pure local used to exist but, with the advent of capitalism, it disappeared after having lost the struggle with globalization. In fact, isolated realities (e.g. remotest or culturally pristine tribes) are rare. When the local disappears, what is left is glocal, because local and global are mutually exclusive.

Glocalization as Subtle Colonialism

However, Ritzer (1993, 2003) balances Roland Robertson’s optimistic vision by highlighting some more negative aspects of glocalization. Contrary to Robertson, Ritzer maintains a dualist perspective (Roudometof, 2015a, p. 6). Hence, globalization is a general process with two ideal-typical outcomes: *grobation* and *glocalization*. The former (centred on *growth*) is a form of hard imperialism (Americanization) pursued by nations, corporations and organizations when the same product is delivered, in the same way, around the world.

The latter is a soft and subtle colonialism, a *top-down* adaptation to the local, still maintaining an unbalanced relation with the latter, which remains subordinate. In other words, the glocal overcomes the local.⁸ Glocalization principles have been implemented by some international managerial styles, worldwide organizations, religious enterprises (e.g. Soka

Gakkai, a Japanese Buddhist religious movement), cross-cultural business and marketing, commercial strategies of companies like Coca-Cola, Mattel (with multicultural Barbie dolls – see Varney, 1998, pp. 162–4), Procter & Gamble, Starbucks, Nike and McDonald’s. This last is probably the most cited case because McDonald’s has adapted its original menu to meet customer wants in different countries (see Ram, 2004, pp. 13–15; Vignali, 2001, pp. 99, 104–6).

Within this framework, there are interesting attempts in social science methodology which I would classify as glocal research methods.

Sampling and Recruitment in Confucian Contexts: The Korean Case

The nature of Confucian societies presents potential conceptual and epistemological gaps between Western methods and their implementation in non-Western contexts. For example, traditional Korean values, which still have an important role in the society and management systems, are expressed in the form of five basic principles: 1) respect for elders, 2) respect for honour, 3) collectivism, 4) family, and 5) the dominance of three kinds of personal connection: blood networks, regional networks and school networks (Jung, 2007). According to these principles, we can discover how random sampling is a Western culturally driven method: ‘indeed, whilst purposive sampling by personal network can be criticized for “cherry picking”, allowing the researcher to hand pick respondents for ease, it perhaps fitted somewhat more naturally with Confucian mores and expectations rather than attempting to recruit unknown individuals who lie outside networks’ (Park & Lunt, 2015). In fact, in her research, Sunghye Park had difficulties in recruiting both senior civil servants (for hierarchical reasons) and, generally, persons outside her direct personal

network, because it is difficult to penetrate the Confucian-ordered societies. Unlike the elite, civil servants who began careers as middle level managers were easier to recruit because the researcher belonged to this group. Of course, these cultural and social constraints can undermine (as noted above) the representativeness of the sample, and researchers should do their best to fill up all the quotas (see Park & Lunt, 2015, for details).

The Group Interview in Thai Contexts

We saw above why focus groups are unsuited to inquiry in Thai research contexts. As Chareerat Intarachamnong puts it:

[t]he way out for this will be the 'group interview', in which the researcher asks the questions separately and individually to the participants ... [The] Delphi method is another technique which may suit Thai; also EDFR (Ethnographic Delphi Futures Research), which was developed by Thai academics to create 'Criteria' in order to avoid collective face-to-face situation[s] ... The discourse interview is a very suitable technique for Thai society or Eastern cultures in my opinion. Because there is no confrontation between key informants; Eastern people are not comfortable in facing opposite opinions and we try to avoid conflict. Basically, Thai and Asian people have a lot of compassion ... for me, the discourse interview is the best technique in the world to collect data. It suits our culture to talk one to one: no confrontation, no conflicts, and no private information to tear out? (personal communication, 13 January 2016)

These adaptations could be considered fine in a glocalist perspective. The question is this: could we go further and overcome the subtle colonialism embodied in glocalization?

'Inter-Localized Methodology' and Creolization as Alternatives

The concept of 'glocalization' is too economic/market meaning and theory-laden, and it still carries a subtle colonialism.

However, as we just saw, the indigenization of methodology is also an outdated project: almost nothing is indigenous anymore. While on the one hand, following Haraway (1988), thinking is always local, embodied in a specific context and connected to a specific place because there is no such thing as a 'god-trick' and 'the view from nowhere [has become] a view from somewhere', on the other, embracing a historical perspective, then nothing is really local or indigenous. Each and every product that we usually define as local has always come from another place. Everything has been imported in a particular historical moment: potatoes from Peru, tomatoes from Central America, vines (probably) from the Caucasus, apples from Central Asia, silk and peaches from China, and so on. All the things that we today consider local have, in reality, come from another place and been mixed up. This could explain why the main features of the Hawaiian epistemology are also traceable to the Buddhist or Taoist ones. Epistemologies are more trans-local than we admit. For example, the idea that the human being is tripartite in body, soul and spirit can be found among the Ancient Greeks, the early Christians until almost AD 1000, and contemporary Inuits, peoples inhabiting the Arctic regions of Greenland, Canada and Alaska.

The same applies to shamanism. Although the word 'shaman' probably originates from the Tungusic Evenki language of *North Asia*, shamanic medicine is widespread in Mongolia, China (Hmong people), Indonesia, North and South Korea, Japan, Siberia and North Asia, India, Nepal, Tibet and Central Asia, Taiwan, Vietnam, *Europe* (from Finland to Italy), Circumpolar (Eskimo Inuit and Yupik cultures), *North America* (native Americans), *Mesoamerica* (Maya of Guatemala, Belize and southern Mexico), *South America* (Kuna of Panama and Colombia; Tapirapé and Shuar people of Ecuador and Peru; several tribes living in the Amazon rainforest of Brazil; Mapuche of Chile, Aymara people of Andes and Altiplano

regions of South America in Bolivia, Peru and Chile; Fuegian peoples of Tierra del Fuego), Papua New Guinea, *Australia* (various aboriginal groups), and *Africa* (Dogon people of Mali; Zulu, Nguni of Southern Africa; Nuba of Sudan; Bantu of Zimbabwe, Zambia, South Africa and Botswana).

In light of these descriptions, 'indigenous' is more a political category than a theoretical one.

If global per se does not exist, because everything global has something local inside it, then perhaps also glocalization is nonsense: there is never an encounter between global and local. There is always an encounter between two locals, two indigenous cultures (e.g. the North American and the Thai) that may understand and accept each other, in an intercultural dialogue, or else the former prevails over and colonizes the other. An 'inter-localized methodology' (Gobo, 2011, p. 433), based on an encounter between two (local) cultures, could produce a new outcome, based on 'dialogicality' and symmetry, without any hegemonic claims.

This encounter can be called 'creolization', an 'unpredictable new creation', as theorized by Edouard Glissant (1928–2011), a Martinican (French West Indies) writer, poet and literary critic, one of the most influential figures in Caribbean thought. In Glissant's view, creolization is a new constitution, not a simple modification or significant variation of the existing one, but a really different, substantial mix of original parts. There exist creole cultures and creole languages (through the pidgin – see Hymes, 1971 and Salikoko, 2001) like *Chavacano* in the Philippines, *Krio* in Sierra Leone, *Tok Pisin* in Papua New Guinea, *Papiamentu* in the Netherlands Antilles, *Belgranodeutsch* in the neighbourhoods of Belgrano in Buenos Aires, *Fanakalo* in South Africa, *Chinglish* and more than 50 others (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pidgin>).

'Creole', alongside other popular terms like 'hybrid', 'syncretism', 'transcultural' and *mestizae* (for an overview, see Burke (2009, pp. 34–65) and for an example, see Ritzer (2011); both quoted by Roudometof (2015b, p. 2)),

recalls the well-known idea of fusion or cultural hybridity. As Roudometof writes:

[t]he contribution of Latin American scholarship to the revitalization of these ideas is considerable. It is from within that region that the terms transculturalism, *mestizae* and creole emerged and eventually transferred into the discourses of North Americans and Europeans. The idea that intercultural mixed peoples (*métissage*) offer the key in legitimizing Latin American identity is a notion originally put forth in 1891 by José Martí in an article entitled 'Nuestra America'. *Métissage* was viewed as a distinctive trait of a culture founded upon a mixture of the native population with different immigrant groups. In the 1940s Fernando Ortiz developed this notion further in order to articulate the concept of transculturalism. Calcini (1995) has furthered Ortiz's ideas and expanded them into the idea of cultural hybridity. Eventually, the concept of transculturalism gained a foothold not only in the fields of literary studies but also in the social sciences (for examples, see Antor et al. (2010); Stockhammer (2012)). (Roudometof, 2015b, p. 3)

There are many cases where the incorporation of (individual and cultural) otherness becomes a new cultural feature (see, for some of several examples, Boccara (2002) on the ethnogenesis of the Mapuche, or Jolly (1992) on the politics of inauthenticity).

Creole carries the idea of equal status between cultures, equilibrium, blend, balance. Exemplars of creolization (outside methodology) are world and ethnic music, blues, jazz and ... the Fulla doll.

The Fulla Doll

In 2004 or so, Barbie dolls had all but disappeared from the shelves of many toy stores in the Middle East. In their place, there was Fulla (see Figure 29.2), a dark-eyed doll with, as her creator put it, 'Muslim values'.

Fulla roughly shares Barbie's size and proportions, but steps out of her shiny pink box wearing a black abaya and matching head scarf. She is named after a type of jasmine that grows in the Levant, and although she has an extensive and beautiful wardrobe



Figure 29.2 A Fulla doll

(sold separately, of course), Fulla is usually displayed wearing her modest ‘outdoor fashion’.

Fulla’s creator, NewBoy Design Studio, based in Syria (now in United Arab Emirates), introduced her in November 2003, and she quickly became a best seller throughout the region. It is nearly impossible to walk into a corner shop in Egypt or Jordan or Qatar without encountering Fulla breakfast cereal or Fulla chewing gum or not to see little girls pedalling down the street on their Fulla bicycles, all in trademark *Fulla pink*. ‘This isn’t just about putting the hijab on a Barbie doll’, brand manager Fawaz Abidin said in 2005. ‘You have to create a character that parents and children will want to relate to. Our advertising is full of positive messages about Fulla’s character. She’s honest,

loving, and caring, and she respects her father and mother’. Though Fulla will never have a boyfriend doll like Barbie’s Ken, Abidin said, a Doctor Fulla and a Teacher Fulla will be introduced soon. ‘These are two respected careers for women that we would like to encourage small girls to follow ... If this doll had come out 10 years ago, I don’t think it would have been very popular ... Fulla is part of this great cultural shift’.⁹

CREOLIZING METHODOLOGY

Although, apparently, the Fulla doll has nothing to do with methodology, it illustrates what a creole research method could be.

Among different methodological solutions (global, glocal or indigenous) there is space for a creole methodology in which research methods originating in different parts of the world (even if we know that most are from Europe and US) can hybridize. There is a growing set of methods (not only methodologies and epistemologies) that are neither really indigenous nor simply colonial: new ways of sampling, collaborative drawing-based inquiry in Australia (Morgan et al., 2009), interviewing techniques (in Argentina) with cards printed with key research concepts related to the body (Sutton, 2011), and others. There follow some interesting examples.

Buddhist Systems Methodology

In their action research described above, Shen and Midgley created a *Buddhist systems methodology* (BSM): ‘unlike many Western action research approaches, which require participants to start by identifying problems or problematic situations, the BSM uses Buddhist concepts that are closely associated with the practice of harmonious living’ (2015, p. 170). The principal strength of the BSM is that it reinterprets the phenomenon in terms that are culturally familiar to, and deeply valued by, people in Taiwanese Buddhist organizations and introduces a route to identify problems, critique the status quo and consider how things ought to be done, using familiar Buddhist concepts that are closely associated with the practice of harmonious living; avoiding the use of less familiar Western systemic action research concepts that can be interpreted as threatening organizational harmony (p. 188).

Methods for Interpreting Silence (and Not Solely Verbal) in Interviews: The Japan Case

As Kawabata and Gastaldo well summarize:

[t]he ways individuals communicate vary across cultures (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1996;

Gudykunst et al., 1996). Gudykunst et al. (1992) suggest that individualistic cultures, such as the US and Canada, use direct and explicit messages to convey meaning, while collectivist cultures such as Japan use indirect and implicit expressions. People in Western cultures focus on explicit communication while viewing silence as merely background (Kim, 2002). (2015, p. 6)

Silence has not been fully appreciated in qualitative research, where it is often considered as a problem and viewed as representative of failure on the part of the interviewers:

[i]n the West, for example, people think that communication is essentially a verbal activity and tend to feel somewhat uncomfortable when others are silent (Newman, 1982). In contrast, in Japan, silence is valued and considered a communication strategy. Rather than indicating a lack of information, it is a culturally grounded part of communication (Nakai, 2002). (Kawabata & Gastaldo, 2015, p. 1)

These features developed from the collectivist imperative because, in a collectivist society, people need to develop communication strategies to preserve group cohesion and solidarity rather than prioritizing individual interests (Hofstede, 1991). For these reasons, it is also argued that Japanese people would ‘prefer to be silent than utter words such as “no” or “I disagree”’ (Nakane, 1972, p. 35). As in Taiwan and, generally, in Buddhist contexts, ‘the avoidance of such open and bold negative expressions is rooted in the fear that it might disrupt the harmony of the group’ (ibid.). Even feelings of defiance or anger can be expressed through silence (Lebra, 1987).

Reflecting on her research experience interviewing Japanese day labourers (one of the most excluded groups), Makie Kawabata found that their silences reflected social expectations in Japanese society, one of which is ‘the less said, the better’. Accordingly, she found that:

[s]ilence is not necessarily a sign of interviewees’ inability to express their thoughts but could be used purposefully to make their stories authentic ... some participants were evasive when they responded ... using expressions like ‘several things’

or 'complicated reasons' to manifest reluctance to speak frankly. Some participants responded vehemently and created tense and awkward moments, which is a way for people to mask their true feelings. In Japan, expressing personal feelings in formal conversation is discouraged because emotions are a sign of weakness and men, in particular, are taught to be strong (Sugihara & Katsurada, 1999) and negative feelings create disharmony (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) ... day laborers became silent or assumed a tense and uncooperative tone of voice when they were in disagreement or discomfort, instead of saying, 'I don't agree with you' or 'I don't feel comfortable talking about this issue'. (Kawabata & Gastaldo, 2015, p. 5)

Kawabata and Gastaldo state that 'without considering participants' silence in interviews, researchers may not only have problems understanding and interpreting meaning but could also create ethical problems when conducting interviews with marginalized populations' (2015, p. 6). The authors note that qualitative research assessment criteria should be considered as a manifestation of Anglo-American academic culture. They illustrate ways in which silence can be used in data analysis and how to treat it in order to reveal the underlying meanings of silence in research conducted in non-Western settings.

CONCLUSION

Amid calls for 'alternative discourses' (Alatas, 2011), in the past 15 years IM have been proposed as an alternative to Western colonial methodologies. However, when applied, IM often end up using Western research methods (focus group, interview, ethnography, Delphi method, drawings, projective techniques, photo taking, and so on).

Inquiring into the reasons for the gap between the fertility of 'decolonizing methodology' theory and the barrenness in producing really indigenous techniques, we have come to the conclusion that the latter are (in the contemporary age) a mirage, because the purely local no longer exists and almost nothing is still indigenous.

Consequently, the two real alternatives to hard methodological colonialism seem to be *glocalization* and *creolization*. Most of the methods applied in non-Western research contexts pertain to one or other of these two possibilities. If glocalization still carries a soft colonialism, the creolization of research methods could be a valid option, as it has been in music, culture and language. The encounter between two (local) methodological cultures can produce an inter-localized methodology, a new outcome (fusion, hybrid, syncretic, transcultural, *mestizo*) based on dialogicality, symmetry, without any hegemonic methodological claims, like the yin and yang, two integrated parts of the same reality.

According to:

Audre Lorde's (1984) dilemma, found in postcolonial theory classes: Can you dismantle the master's house (i.e. imperialism, colonialism, etc.) with the master's tools? Answer: *yes and no*. All outward realities are first inward impressions and thought patterns. A new consciousness must be forged to approach old issues. False dualities of master/slave must also be reconfigured. (Aluli-Meyer, 2008, p. 231)

Notes

- 1 The core ideas of this chapter have been presented at the *New Tricks of Our Trade: Overcoming Parochialism*, 28th biannual Nordic Sociological Association conference, University of Helsinki, 12 August 2016. I warmly thank the President Sirpa Wrede, for the invitation.
- 2 This has also been recognized by early ethnomethodology with the notion of the 'reflexivity' of members' accounts. Ethnomethodology states also that our observations do much more than simply describe a situation (Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979). Moreover, Western approaches born in the 1970s like 'cooperative research', 'participatory action research', 'action science', 'process consultation', 'empowerment' and 'intervention research' start from the assumption that knowledge and intervention are part of the process itself of the researcher's cognitive structuring: hence, every analysis is already an intervention and every intervention is also an analysis.
- 3 Similar problems with 'informant consent' have been noted in Tanzania, Kenya and Indonesia (see Ryen, 2004).

- 4 'Kreng jai' means being aware of other people's feelings and showing politeness, respect and consideration towards them.
- 5 The same criticism can be addressed to other scholars' proposals. For example, Kirkness and Barnhardt's (1991) relational axiology, embodied in the '4 Rs framework' (respect, relevance, reciprocity and responsibility), for conducting research with aboriginal communities, more recently highlighted also by Wilson (2008) and Chilisa (2012).
- 6 The *Theatre of the Oppressed* was invented in the early 1960s by the Brazilian theatre practitioner Augusto Boal. He was influenced by the work of the educator and theorist Paulo Freire. Originally, it was a method to make people more aware about social conflicts. In its European interpretation, the *Theatre of the Oppressed* was used to work on intra-personal conflicts, exploring the inner person (loneliness, helplessness, confusion, unease) and his/her hidden oppression. Boal's techniques use theatre as a means to promote personal, social and political change.
- 7 *Mystery shopping* (or *mystery consumer* or *secret shopper*) is a method used externally by market research companies, watchdog organizations or internally by companies themselves to check quality of service, compliance with regulations or to gather specific information about products and services. The mystery consumer's specific identity and purpose is generally not known by the establishment being evaluated. Mystery shoppers perform specific tasks such as purchasing a product, asking questions, registering complaints or behaving in a certain way, and then provide detailed reports or feedback about their experiences.
- 8 There is a new cultural phenomenon which represents interesting revenge by the local on the global. It has been called *lobalization* (Chew, 2010): locally manufactured cultural products (e.g. pass-off menswear in China) are packaged and circulated in a locality in the guise of prestigious imported products. The practical significance of this global cultural dynamic is that 'lobal' products are beginning to spread around the globe and that they can negatively impact on global original-brand manufacturers and also local creative industries.
- 9 For an update on this phenomenon, see Bado and Sachs Norris (2015).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am also grateful to Denise Gastado (University of Toronto), Chareerat Intarachamnong (Kasem Bundit University, Bangkok), Pierangelo Peri (University of Trento) and Victor Roudometof (University of Cyprus, Nicosia) for their remarks. In addition, the comments and suggestions made by anonymous reviewers were extremely helpful.

REFERENCES

- Alasuutari, P. (2004), The globalization of qualitative research. In C. Seale, G. Gobo, J.F. Gubrium and D. Silverman (Eds.), *Qualitative Research Practice*. London: Sage, pp. 595–608.
- Alatas, Syed Farid (2011), The definition and types of alternative discourse. In Georgette Wang (Ed.), *De-Westernizing Communication Research: Altering Questions and Changing Frameworks*. London: Routledge, pp. 238–53.
- Alexander, J. (2003), *The Meanings of Social Life: A Cultural Sociology*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Aluli-Meyer, M. (2008), Indigenous and authentic: Hawaiian epistemology and the triangulation of meaning. In N.K. Denzin, Y.S. Lincoln and L.T. Smith (Eds.), *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 217–32.
- Atal, Yogesh (1981), The call for indigenization. *International Social Science Journal*, 33(1): 189–97.
- Atal, Yogesh (2014), The call for indigenisation. In P.M. Mukherji and C. Sengupta (Eds.), *Indigeneity and Universality in Social Science. A South-Asian Response*. New Dehli, India: Sage, pp. 99–113.
- Atkinson, Paul and Ryen, Anne (2016), Indigenous research and romantic nationalism. *Societies*, 6(34): 1–13.
- Bado, N. and Sachs Norris, R. (2015), Games and dolls. In J.C. Lyden and E.M. Mazur (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Religion*

- and *Popular Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 261–80.
- Boccara, Guillaume (2002), The Mapuche people in post-dictatorship Chile. *Etudes Rurales*, 3(163/164): 283–303.
- Boggiano, V.L., Harris, L.M. and Nguyen, D.T. (2015), Building connections while conducting qualitative health fieldwork in Vietnam: Two case studies. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 14(4). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406915619249>.
- Burke, P. (2009), *Cultural Hybridity*. Oxford, UK: Polity.
- Chen, X. (2015), Challenges and strategies of teaching qualitative research in China. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 22(2): 72–86.
- Chew, M.M. (2010), Delineating the emergent global cultural dynamic of 'lobalization': The case of pass-off menswear in China. *Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 24(4): 559–71.
- Chilisa, Bagele (2012), *Indigenous Research Methodologies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989), Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, PhilPapers, 140: 139–67.
- Davis, Angela Y. (1983), *Women, Race & Class*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Deloria, V., Jr. (1969), *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*. New York: Macmillan.
- Denzin, N.K., Lincoln, Y.S. and Smith, L. (Eds.). (2008), *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- De Sousa Santos, Boaventura (2014), *Epistemologies of the South. Justice against Epistemicide*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.
- Evans, M., Hole, R., Berg, L.D., Hutchinson, P. and Sookraj, D. (2009), Common insights, differing methodologies: Toward a fusion of indigenous methodologies, participatory action research, and white studies in an urban aboriginal research agenda. *Qualitative Research*, 15(5): 893–910.
- Fielding, N.G. (2014), Qualitative research and our digital futures. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20(2): 1064–73.
- Flick, Uwe and Röhnsch, G. (2014), Migrating Diseases: Triangulating Approaches—Applying qualitative inquiry as a global endeavor. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20(9): 1096–109.
- Galtung, J. (1999), Education and Buddhism. In S. Sivaraksa, P. Udomittipong and C. Walker (Eds.), *Socially Engaged Buddhism for the New Millennium*, The Satirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation – The Foundation for Children.
- Giorgino, V.M.B. (2015), Contemplative methods meet social sciences: Back to human experience as it is. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 45: 461–83.
- Gobo, Giampietro (2011), Globalizing methodology? The encounter between local methodologies. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 14(6): 417–37.
- Gobo, G. and Mauceri, S. (2014), *Constructing Survey Data. An Interactional Approach*. London, Sage.
- González Gálvez, Marcelo (2015), The truth of experience and its communication: Reflections on Mapuche epistemology. *Anthropological Theory*, 15(2): 141–57.
- Haraway, D. (1988), Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14: 575–99.
- Hoban, G. F. (2002). *Teacher Learning for Educational Change: A System Thinking Approach*. Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Hofstede, G. (1991), *Culture and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. London: McGraw-Hill.
- hooks, bell (1984), *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. New York: Routledge.
- Hsiung, Ping-Chun (2012), The globalization of qualitative research: Challenging Anglo-American domination and local hegemonic discourse. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 13(1), <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs1201216>.
- Hsiung, Ping-Chun (2015), Pursuing qualitative research from the global south: 'Investigative research' during China's 'Great Leap Forward' (1958–62). *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 16(3), Art. 2, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs150325>.
- Hymes, D. (1971), *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Jolly, Margaret (1992), Specters of inauthenticity. *The Contemporary Pacific*, 4(1): 49–72.

- Jung, S. (2007), *The Korean's Cultural Grammar*. Seoul, South Korea: Saenggakui Namu.
- Kawabata, M. and Gastaldo, D. (2015), The less said, the better: Interpreting silence in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 14(4): 1–9.
- Kirkness, Verna J. and Barnhardt, Ray (1991), First Nations and higher education: The four R's—respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 30(3): 1–15.
- Kovach, Maggie (2009), *Indigenous Methodologies*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Lebra, T.S. (1987), The cultural significance of silence in Japanese communication. *Multilingua – Journal of Cross-Cultural and Interlanguage Communication*, 6: 343–57.
- Lee, Myra C.Y. (2014), An insider's moments of Confucian ethical conflict: Reflexivity as the 'Middle Way' response. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 12(4): 299–316.
- Mathur, Ajeet N. (2014), Inquiring minds and inquiry frames. In P.M. Mukherji and C. Sengupta (Eds.), *Indigeneity and Universality in Social Science. A South-Asian Response*. New Delhi, India: Sage, pp. 171–86.
- McCall, Leslie (2005), The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 30(3): 1771–800.
- McDougal III, Serie (2014), *Research Methods in Africana Studies*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Meyrowitz, J. (2005), The rise of glocality: New senses of place and identity in the global village. In K. Nyíri (Ed.), *A Sense of Place: The Global and the Local in Mobile Communication*. Vienna, Austria: Passagen Verlag, 21–30.
- Miller, Daphne (2008), *The Jungle Effect: A Doctor Discovers the Healthiest Diets from Around the World*. New York: Harper.
- Morgan, M., McInerney, F., Rumbold, J. and Liamputtong, P. (2009), Drawing the experience of chronic vaginal thrush and complementary and alternative medicine. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12(2): 127–46.
- Nakane, C. (1972), *Japanese Society*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Nicholls, R. (2009), Research and indigenous participation: Critical reflexive methods. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12(2): 117–26.
- Park, S. and Lunt, N. (2015), Confucianism and qualitative interviewing: Working Seoul to soul. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 16(2): Art. 7, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs150274>.
- Radhakrishnan, S. (2010), Limiting theory: Rethinking approaches to cultures of globalization. In B.S. Turner (Ed.), *Routledge International Handbook of Globalization*. London: Routledge, pp. 23–41.
- Ram, U. (2004), Glocommodification: How the global consumes the local – McDonald's in Israel. *Current Sociology*, 52(1): 11–31.
- Remen, R.N. (1999), Educating for mission, meaning and compassion. In S. Glazer (Ed.) *The Heart of Learning*. New York: Penguin Putnam, pp. 33–50.
- Ritzer, G. (1993), *The McDonaldization of Society*. London: Sage.
- Ritzer, G. (2003), Rethinking globalization: Glocalization/globalization and something/nothing. *Sociological Theory*, 21(3): 193–209.
- Ritzer, G. (2011), *Globalization: The Essentials*. Oxford, UK: Wiley/Blackwell.
- Robertson, R. (1992), *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*. London: Sage.
- Robertson, R. (2013), Situating glocalization: A relatively autobiographical intervention. In G.S. Drori, M.A. Höllerer and P. Walgenbach (Eds.), *Global Themes and Local Variations in Organization and Management: Perspectives on Glocalization*. New York: Routledge, pp. 25–36.
- Roos, V. (2008), The Mmogo™-method: Discovering symbolic community interactions. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 18(4): 659–68.
- Roudometof, Victor (2015a), Theorizing globalization: Three interpretations. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 1–18: 391–408.
- Roudometof, Victor (2015b), Mapping the glocal turn: Literature streams, scholarship clusters and debates in glocalism. *Journal of Culture, Politics and Innovation*, 3: 1–21.
- Ryen, A. (2000), Colonial methodology? Methodological challenges to cross-cultural projects collecting data by structured interviews. In C. Truman, D.M. Mertens and B. Humphries (Eds.), *Research and Inequality*. London: UCL Press, pp. 215–30.

- Ryen, A. (2004), Ethical issues. In C. Seale, G. Gobo, J.F. Gubrium and D. Silverman (Eds.), *Qualitative Research Practice*. London: Sage, pp. 217–29.
- Ryen, A. (2011), Exploring or exporting? Qualitative methods in times of globalisation. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 14(6): 439–53.
- Salikoko, M. (2001), *The Ecology of Language Evolution*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Schwartz, H. and Jacobs, J. (1979), *Qualitative Sociology: A Method to the Madness*. New York: The Free Press.
- Shen, C.-Y. and Midgley, G. (2007), Toward a Buddhist systems methodology 1: Comparisons between Buddhism and systems theory. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 20: 167–94.
- Shen, C.-Y. and Midgley, G. (2015), Action research in a problem avoiding culture using a Buddhist systems methodology. *Action Research*, 13: 170–93.
- Sivaraksa, S., Udomittipong P. and Walker C. (1999) (eds.), *Socially Engaged Buddhism for the New Millennium*. The Satirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation – The Foundation for Children.
- Smith, L.T. (1999), *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books.
- Smith, L.T. (2005), On tricky ground: Researching the native in the age of uncertainty. In N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 85–107.
- Sutton, B. (2011), Playful cards, serious talk: A qualitative research technique to elicit women's embodied experience. *Qualitative Research*, 11(2): 177–96.
- Suwankhong, D. and Liamputtong, P. (2015), Cultural insiders and research fieldwork: Case examples from cross-cultural research with Thai people. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 14(5). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406915621404>.
- Travers, M. (2009), New methods, old problems: A skeptical view of innovation in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 9(2): 161–79.
- Varela, F.J. and Shear, J. (eds.) (1999), *The View from Within: First-Person Approaches to the Study of Consciousness*. Thorverton, UK: Imprint Academic.
- Varney, W. (1998), Barbie Australis: The commercial reinvention of national culture. *Social Identities*, 4: 161–75.
- Vignali, C. (2001), McDonald's: 'Think global, act local' – the marketing mix. *British Food Journal*, 103(2): 97–111.
- Wilson, Shawn (2008), *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Black Point, Nova Scotia, Canada: Fernwood Publishing Co.

Conducting and Publishing Rigorous Qualitative Research

Alexandra Rheinhardt, Glen E. Kreiner,
Dennis A. Gioia and Kevin G. Corley

INTRODUCTION

What constitutes ‘qualitative rigor’ and how do scholars attempt to achieve it within their research approaches? With the growth of qualitative studies in research on management and organization, this twofold question has received increasing attention over the years. Unlike much quantitative research, qualitative efforts often lack structured guidance or standardized ‘templates’ that prescribe consensus conventions for data collection and analysis (Pratt, 2008). This was well illustrated when two authors of this chapter (Denny and Glen), who are not only both grounded theorists, but colleagues who each developed approaches to achieving qualitative rigor with their many collaborators over the years, sat down to discuss their views on conducting systematic, rigorously executed qualitative research and found some notable differences in both their assumptions and processes. Their means of arriving at a common end – high-quality qualitative

research – differed, even though both have been engaged in grounded theory studies that frequently center on identity-related issues. The deeper they delved into explaining the rationales and motivations behind their own research processes, the more apparent it became that a wide variety of options exist when conducting rigorous qualitative research. This prompted further dialogue among all the authors of this chapter surrounding the many divergent inductive methods used by some prominent organizational scholars.

Rather than attempting to systematically analyze and summarize the dizzying array of procedures employed in extant qualitative work, we have opted to engage in a three-pronged approach of our own attempts to understand the notion of qualitative rigor. First, we provide a brief overview of some classic efforts to achieve rigor in conducting, analyzing, and presenting qualitative research. For many readers, this overview will serve as a refresher of the tactics that

have been incorporated into our field's methodological efforts. Second, we touch on our own backgrounds and how we arrived at this chapter. Throughout, we will delineate some of the key commonalities and differences among the research approaches we use. We believe that the refinements that have resulted through our cumulative 60-plus years of research can add some value to others' work. Third, our main focus derives from the generous input we received from our contemporary peers who also conduct high-quality qualitative research. Specifically, we approached 25 scholars who have been recognized for their superior qualitative work with a request for their responses to open ended questions about how they go about doing rigorous qualitative work. We first asked what conducting rigorous qualitative research means to them; then we asked how they work to convince readers that their studies have been rigorously conducted. Of the 25 researchers, 17 responded – with replies ranging from a few paragraphs to a few pages – providing a broad scope of rich input that we think will be valuable to both novice and experienced qualitative scholars. We do not advocate for any 'single best approach' for achieving rigor, but rather celebrate the plurality of opinions regarding the very meaning of qualitative rigor and the myriad ways that successful qualitative scholars of organization and management engage in their craft.

We have derived four overarching themes that encompass many of our informants' most insightful comments. We focus on commentary in response to the following questions: 1) What is qualitative rigor? 2) What are common challenges to conducting rigorous qualitative research? 3) How do accomplished qualitative researchers achieve rigor? 4) How can rigor be instilled in the sampling, data collection, and analysis phases of qualitative studies? Because the latter question has received more previous attention, we will focus more extensively on the former three themes. We have augmented colleagues' thoughtful quotes with some brief

'metacommentary' (see Gioia et al., 2010) in concluding each section.

A TRADITIONAL VIEW OF QUALITATIVE RIGOR

As I search the literature, I find that everyone agrees evaluation is necessary but there is little consensus about what that evaluation should consist of. Are we judging for 'validity' or would it be better to use terms like 'rigor' (Mays & Pope, 1995), 'truthfulness', or 'goodness' (Emden & Sandelowski, 1999), or something called 'integrity' (Watson & Girard, 2004) when referring to qualitative evaluation? Then there is the question, can one set of criteria apply to all forms of qualitative research? (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 297)

This sentiment – from one of the leading guides for qualitative research – reflects the dilemma that often dogged the early years of qualitative research. The essence of qualitative research lends itself to many descriptive terms, yet the uniqueness of each undertaking leaves one grasping at numerous straws. We reflect upon this state of affairs and contemplate qualitative rigor as we and many of our contemporaries consider the features that enable qualitative research to flourish in the realm of organizational science.

Of course, any consideration of qualitative methods in the social sciences must include Glaser and Strauss' 1967 classic treatise, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. The methodology they put forth identified factors that have been adopted by many qualitative research scholars, even those not doing grounded theory work (Corley, 2015). More specifically, Glaser and Strauss called for constant comparison, theoretical sampling, applicability, and credibility to be incorporated as procedural elements of qualitative studies. With a focus on credibility, they posed three ways in which a study could be judged. These included: 1) an appropriate level of detail/description to ensure plausibility to the audience; 2) a sufficient amount of information describing data collection and

analysis procedures to adequately support the researcher's conclusions; and 3) an overview of the types of data used by the researcher.

Beyond *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, we also note the foundational contribution of Lincoln and Guba's *Naturalistic Inquiry* (1985) in their effort dedicated to the concept of trustworthiness, a key outcome of the pursuit of rigor. Perhaps still as relevant today as it was when written, the qualitative researchers' fundamental concern lives on regarding the need to persuade audiences into accepting one's study as plausible, meaningful, and worthwhile. Lincoln and Guba identified four key criteria in their conceptualization of trustworthiness, which have been used by many subsequent qualitative researchers. Indeed, these criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were each cited to varying degrees in their discourse on rigor by the contemporary scholars we contacted.

We also acknowledge Hammersley's (1987) work on validity, precision, and reliability; Morse et al.'s (2002) effort on rigor; Creswell's (1998) focus on credibility and trustworthiness, and Bruner's (1991) concern with verisimilitude. Because our intention is only to present an overview of classical work related to rigor, we will note that there are many other resources available. For the new and/or inquisitive qualitative scholar, the above can serve as a guide for where to begin when starting your research journeys.

CONVERGENCES AND DIVERGENCES

Of course, with such a plurality of approaches to conducting qualitative research in a rigorous way, there are bound to be interesting and useful similarities and differences among them. Although a comprehensive analysis of all approaches would be well beyond the scope of this chapter, we came to believe that a relatively brief comparison of how we ourselves – the

authors of this chapter – approach rigor could be useful. The two approaches in question are what has come to be known as the 'Gioia methodology' (Gioia et al., 2013),¹ developed in work with a number of colleagues over many years, and the 'Tabula Geminus' or 'twin slate' approach associated with Kreiner (2016) and his colleagues.

Two important considerations prompted the inclusion of components of our own approaches within this chapter. We wanted to be reflexive about the fact that all four authors of this chapter study cognition and identity-related research and have been associated with the Penn State Management & Organization department – which has a long history of qualitative scholarship – and that such a commonality might overly narrow our worldview on defining rigor (Gioia and Kreiner are faculty colleagues at Penn State; Corley came out of the Penn State PhD program; and Rheinhardt is currently in the Penn State PhD program). Although we were aware of each other's effort to conduct solid qualitative research with requisite 'rigor', it was also evident that Gioia, Kreiner, and Corley had bootstrapped different paths to achieve rigor in producing credible research. Despite our multiple paths, we were all guided by procedures that enabled us to conduct and write up rigorous research. Of course, there are also similarities in our approaches, as well.

Second, deliberating our varying approaches sparked the notion that this effort would be far richer if we refrained from limiting the content to only our own inputs and opinions. Therefore, we consulted with our colleagues in the field to help identify considerations they embrace to ensure rigor. That rich input is presented in the subsequent section so that we can more deeply understand the multiple ways that our peers engage in rigorous research. Thus, the views we provide throughout can serve as models for reference, although we acknowledge that there are many additional processes and procedures that could serve a similar purpose.

WHAT IS RIGOR?

As noted above, we contacted qualitatively oriented scholars who have published multiple times in top management journals. Our inquiry opened with the question, ‘What does conducting rigorous qualitative research mean to you?’ Perhaps not unexpectedly, consistent, monovocal responses were rare; rather, a variety of themes emerged from which we were able to develop some categories for appreciating not only the commonalities, but also the nuanced differences in responses. We sensed that by locating these responses within a series of themes, an informative structure would evolve that could facilitate both understanding and reflection. Although we articulate these themes below, we begin with an apt metaphor to set the stage for the conduct of qualitatively rigorous inquiry; Davide Ravasi noted to us, ‘The kind of rigor expected from a qualitative researcher is perhaps closer to the rigor expected from an investigative journalist or a detective, rather than an engineer or scientist’.

Ravasi has captured a major theme (which we further develop throughout this chapter) centered on the notion that while the qualitative researcher strives to deliver indisputable understanding, these efforts do not hinge on strict standards that are uniformly imposed across all scholars and studies. Instead, to achieve rigor, the researcher employs means that ensure they remain true to the informant by accurately capturing all that is relevant and significant to the informants’ descriptions. In essence, rigorous research protocols can and likely should vary on a case-by-case basis, as is further explored in the following section.

The Big Tent Approach

We termed our initial category the ‘big tent approach’ (see also Tracy, 2010) as it was based on the realization that (to mix metaphors) while one shoe does not fit all, a big

tent can house many. With this understanding, our informants expressed the acceptance of expansive flexibility as rigor is pursued by adhering to criteria that are specific to the focal research endeavor. Spencer Harrison captured this notion in offering that ‘rigor is less about following prescriptions and more about justifying decisions with the underlying goal being to add depth and nuance to the theoretical picture that is emerging’. Therefore, fitting the process into a previously used or preconceived methodology does not connote rigor, as each study is unique and therefore likely to require at least some degree of customization. Sally Maitlis further reiterated this need for flexibility as she noted, ‘How I ensure rigor, and even what rigor means, varies a lot with the kind of study I am doing’. Indeed, in our own discussions on methodology, we realized that we have never followed exactly the same process with any two of our own studies – that each one requires some adaptation as the theory emerges and evolves. With this in mind, our contributors recognize that it is not commonality that defines rigor:

Readers should probably recognize that, 1) Different types of qualitative research (as it is commonly understood) have different objectives and so different criteria for quality likely apply, and 2) There is no one best way to conduct research or one template that should be forced onto what is essentially a highly creative task. (Kathy Eisenhardt)

Our colleagues also acknowledged that beyond rigor being guided by the type of study, so too does it depend on one’s epistemological stance (or what someone perceives as knowledge about a phenomenon). In light of this, a continuum of views exists with those believing in measurable objective truths at one end of the spectrum, extending to those believing that all knowledge is socially constructed at the other end. Thus, the individual’s lens through which we view the world will undoubtedly contribute to our perceptions of rigor. As one of our colleagues aptly explained:

There are some people out there who do qualitative research who do not believe that there is an objective reality. So my answer to your question is that I think if you sat down and looked at qualitative research you would find a whole array of ways that people try to construct rigor – from ‘I didn’t even try’ to a nearly quantitative analysis from qualitatively collected data. (Steve Barley)

There is undoubtedly value in recognizing that qualitative rigor needs to be painted with a broad brush approach allowing for the varying nuances and dynamics each study presents. With that said, there are several considerations that are worthy of notation and therefore can be applied to a multitude of studies. Although these will be discussed below, we find it worth mentioning now that two of our respondents, in addressing the meaning of rigor, discussed its antithesis or, more specifically, *what rigor is not*. Upon reflecting upon their comments, we too understood the significance of their identification of characteristics that have at times been confused as traits associated with rigor. For that reason, we include this input to shed light on the traps that often tug at qualitative researchers as they pursue their efforts:

Qualitative research is not rigorous just because it follows a structured, rigid protocol for data collection and analysis; it is rigorous if it is transparent about the unexpected, surprising observations that led you to reorient your focus, the twists and turns that the project took as your observations challenge your initial research interests and working assumptions. It is not rigorous if it tries to minimize surprises; it is rigorous if it remains open to surprising, unexpected observations, and uses them as a way to reorient data collection and analysis, and sharpen emerging interpretations. (Davide Ravasi)

Rigor then is not just in the eye of the beholder, nor in some ‘stock’ criteria a researcher brings to her data collection and analysis; it’s an emergent and somewhat social process of establishing and conveying credibility. (Jennifer Howard-Grenville)

As Davide and Jennifer suggest, the secret of rigor does not rest in a blueprint that is plotted at the onset of a study, neither is it located in a prescribed formula neatly tucked away in a handbook. Rather, in establishing rigor,

the researcher must often engage in what is a messy and iterative process. Expanding upon this notion, while qualitative studies are often labeled as inductive research, they at times, and perhaps more commonly, follow an abductive approach. More specifically, this may involve an explicit incorporation of extant theory within the analysis process, allowing for emerging findings to be compared with theoretically based and predicted results.

We embrace many of the expansive perspectives that our colleagues offer in attempting to define qualitative rigor with the understanding that the actual definition largely rests in the uniqueness of the particular study and the distinctive practices of the researcher(s). By no means, however, should this vagueness be interpreted as a basis for roughshod research, as specific standards will be delineated which indeed ensure rigor.

Specific Standards for Rigor

Some of our participants reflected upon the importance of maintaining a pureness within qualitative studies in citing the need to encompass trustworthiness and verisimilitude as criteria under the rigor umbrella. This is acknowledged by Raghu Garud, who claimed, ‘I have been influenced by the notion of trustworthiness as proposed by Lincoln and Guba and verisimilitude proposed by Bruner’. And, although Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 290) did not offer a direct definition for the concept of trustworthiness, they had suggested that ‘the basic issue in relation to trustworthiness is simple: How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?’ Bruner followed a path similar to Lincoln and Guba’s in providing a practical analysis of verisimilitude: ‘Unlike the constructions generated by logical and scientific procedures that can be weeded out by falsification, narrative constructions can only

achieve “verisimilitude”. We view verisimilitude as providing the most accurate and believable account possible given the subjectivity of the data one has to work with.

In addition to the prior perspectives on trustworthiness and verisimilitude, our colleagues expanded the dialogue by providing their insightful understanding as follows:

For me, rigorous inductive qualitative research is, at least in large part, research that does minimal violence to experience – that is, research that reflects the worldview of your informants. (Michael Pratt)

To me rigorous qualitative research is characterized by what in Italian we refer to as ‘intellectual honesty’: not concealing evidence that may question your provisional interpretations, deliberately looking for sources that may question these interpretations, striving to account for discrepant evidence, rather than sweeping it under the carpet. (Davide Ravasi)

Without explicitly addressing verisimilitude, Pratt implies that the qualitative researcher who embraces it seeks to provide an account that successfully represents informants’ versions of reality without unduly imposing their own (the researcher’s) views onto the informant and/or their analysis. This, of course, is an inherent tension in qualitative research – representing the scope of diversity in informants’ lived experiences while simultaneously synthesizing those experiences into themes that are transferable to other domains.

Rheinhardt adds her thoughts on what rigor entails:

As a newcomer to the qualitative field, I consider two domains when I think of rigor. In the briefest terms, I refer to these as the rough and the polished. The rough is composed of resulting raw data and observed processes that researchers thoughtfully synthesize into understanding. This begins with effective research design, a holistic approach to relevant data collection, well-thought out choice of data sources and interview protocols, and carefully considered analytical procedures. The polished comes in when putting all the nit and grit into word. By the time I reach this point there is the sense that a meaningful story has been uncovered

and now must be translated into a rational, logical, and interesting tale.

Rheinhardt has considered our colleagues’ collective views to arrive at the recognition that rigor can be viewed along a continuum, with conceptions of rigor varying from one qualitative scholar to the next but with points of overlap among them. Furthermore, and despite this lack of consensus, it is her view that rigor is best achieved when threaded through every phase of a study, from start to finish; from the design of an interview protocol and selection of informants to the final written account that faithfully adheres to informants’ accounts while providing a compelling story.

CHALLENGES TO RIGOR

Interestingly, despite not being directly queried, ‘challenges to rigor’ emerged as a central theme that was significant to a number of our colleagues. The fact that this issue arose suggests that regardless of the many advances that have developed in qualitative research processes over the years, some of the obstacles threatening the perceived value of qualitative studies live on. For instance, our informants discussed several general concerns facing those who practice qualitative research:

I always find a method section very difficult to write. A colleague described this as a section on ‘creative re-construction’ and most qualitative researchers seem to agree with the impossibility of qualitative research following a tight design and the logical application of clean principles. Rigor tends to overemphasize rationality, logic, procedure, technique and give an impression of objectivity and neutrality as well as theory-data separation. (Mats Alvesson)

I have to acknowledge a growing personal dissatisfaction with much of the noise and fury about rigour in qualitative research. While I fully agree that our research should be accurate, methodologically precise and auditable, I am concerned

with creeping positivism that is implicit in much of this discourse. The review process of leading management journals encourages us to hide the subjectivity and interpretation that is at the core of insightful qualitative research ... Could we ever be allowed to say 'the insight for explaining my data emerged in a dream' or 'occurred while having a shower' or 'arose in a heated debate on a completely unrelated topic'? (Roy Suddaby)

Our colleagues have keenly observed that what our field's top journals consider to be the criteria for achieving rigor through writing is often antithetical to the actual production of rigor through data collection and analysis. In other words, attempting to satisfy a standard can ultimately deter us from achieving rigor because qualitative research often tends to be messy and at times disjointed, whereas journal standards tend to be rooted in a desire for that which is tightly specified and/or linear.

To add to this concern regarding traditional reviewing assumptions, Sarah Tracy suggested, 'One of my ongoing goals as a qualitative researcher is to redecorate the mainstream publishing houses from the inside out, so that interpretive and iterative research may offer their rich insight in these places'. We share these views merely to offer one perspective on how qualitative research is too often perceived in organizational research. It is not our goal to offer a critique of the current state of inductive research, but rather to provide our (the authors) and our colleagues' with input on what constitutes qualitative rigor and how it can be imbued into our studies.

Data to Theory Connections

As is apparent by now, qualitative data is rarely anchored in standardized procedures. At the same time, we recognize that data provide us with a rich understanding of commonalities that are linked to how and why events and experiences come about. The art of illustrating the critical connection between data and theory can indeed be difficult, as any 'formulas' to apply are general guidelines at

best. Sally Maitlis explained that 'Showing rigor through data is another complicated matter. I often provide extensive data tables to show the sorts of quotations and other data that underpin different themes'. We were provided with further elaboration on how the audience can be guided beyond this data/theory connection obstacle, however, with thoughtful analysis and dialogue that culminates in meaningful theory.

When writing up qualitative data the challenge is to provide a clear path from the data to your theoretical contribution. This means walking your reader through the process that you went through as you analyzed your data in a clear and accessible way. Your reader should not need to take anything on faith but should be able to see the complete process from raw data to theory (whether it is a process model or a typology of some sort). This often means the use of tables and other innovative ways of displaying multiple samples of your data in a relatively concise manner while providing a clear narrative of how you worked your way from the raw data to your generalized observations. You can never, of course, show that your analysis is the 'right' or 'only' analysis but you can provide enough detail and enough of a clear and convincing story that your reader accepts that your story is possible and rooted deep in your data. (Nelson Phillips)

I try to convey rigor by showing plenty of data (I am using Golden-Biddle and Locke's showing/telling distinction here). I personally have a preference for showing data within the text of a paper. I have never been much in favor of data tables. In fact, when I read a paper I want the findings section to speak for itself; supplementary data tables are fine but I often only look at them at the end. If it's important, it needs to be in the text. And if it's important, it needs to read as credible and tied in with other aspects of the findings. So, I tend to want to write a 'story' in the findings section, with lots of showing, but then of course the challenge is to weave in 'telling'. (Jennifer Howard-Grenville)

To cap this off, we agree that continuous detail throughout one's written account is necessary to adequately lead one's readers from the data to theory. This process is largely dependent on personal preferences and a study's dynamics as we and our colleagues enact our belief that there is no one right or best way. A convincing paper can

incorporate data tables or other forms of visual aids or, on the other hand, simply logically thread both data and theory together throughout.

Presentation

As qualitative researchers, we understand that our data often loses something in translation whenever researchers do not use direct quotes. The question becomes, ‘how do we translate the richness of the informant’s experience in a manner that is both true to life and tells an interesting story?’ Perhaps most importantly, the data presentation must be believable, which is addressed in the following sentiments:

The challenge, of course, is that we still rely on the written word to convey our work and frequently qualitative researchers have at their disposal all sorts of richer/voluminous forms of data that are hard to reduce to some parsimonious words ... So, that is a challenge for us as a field to figure out how authors can rigorously convey the nature of their setting when it’s not conducive to summarizing in quotes. (Jennifer Howard-Grenville)

I think one of the biggest challenges of writing up qualitative research is to balance the narrative (to inspire your reader) with the evidence (to convince your reader) ... This is, I think, the ‘art’ of writing up qualitative studies and is inseparable (and indistinguishable) from the act of theorizing itself. (Nelson Phillips)

This dual-fold dilemma of deciding what to show and what to tell has been a thorn in the sides of many researchers. At times, it is almost as if one is left struggling to mold valuable data into vernacular that is inherently limited. Specifically, presenting evidence that is in non-traditional form (i.e. data that is not already in writing) represents a challenge.

The authors of this chapter consider paper structure to be fundamental to scholarly presentation. Both Gioia and Corley believe it is preferable to limit their theorizing from the data in the Findings sections of their papers, choosing instead to focus the reader on a data

structure that illustrates the progression from raw data to coded data. It is typically later that their theoretical models appear with interpretations of the meaning of the data, again matching with the data structure presented earlier. They argue that by presenting their raw data in its ‘pure form’ prior to theorizing, their theories are indeed more ‘grounded’ in the particular experience of their informants. Conversely, Kreiner and his colleagues typically (a) provide a model earlier to serve as a map by which they guide their readers and (b) weave in commentary and theorizing throughout the Findings section rather than waiting until the discussion section. The justification is that this process allows for a steady continuum of interpretation to balance what Golden-Biddle and Locke called ‘showing’ (the raw data) and ‘telling’ (the interpretation of those data), as well as a way to integrate existing theory with the details of the study’s findings.

Criteria for Achieving Rigor

Just as all qualitative studies are unique, so are some of the criteria on which researchers rely to achieve rigor. Our colleagues offered insights about elements they have noted in others’ high-quality qualitative research – as well as steps they have personally taken to ensure that their studies are rigorous, as well as methods they have used so that readers appreciate the rigor of their study and sense that the findings are credible. We were able to align many of their self-imposed criteria into more general themes of credibility, transparency, transferability, reflexivity, and depth and volume of data.

Credibility

Credibility, though not explicitly defined, was mentioned by Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 296) as a criterion for establishing trustworthiness. They claimed that ensuring one’s

findings are credible represents a twofold task: 'first, to carry out the inquiry in such a way that the probability that the findings will be found to be credible is enhanced and, second, to demonstrate the credibility of the findings by having them approved by the constructors of the multiple realities being studied'. We find it interesting that each of our informants who indicated that credibility was key to achieving rigor focused on the delivery of their presentations. Perhaps they were operating on the presumption that data and interpretation are sound and thus the communication of the same inspires acceptance by the audience. Jennifer Howard-Grenville captured this notion by noting, 'To be credible, I tend to look for markers such as whether the context and the findings are described richly enough that I as a reader have a sense of how things fit together and how things "work" in that setting'. Our colleagues further expanded on the notion of credibility:

Credibility involves making the chain of evidence that supports your interpretation of the data as clear as possible ... But the credibility of interpretation should be addressed without a litmus test such as the number of interviews conducted and the presence of data tables. Credibility is a form of narrative persuasiveness. It is a judgment left to each reader and not the outcome of a formulaic process. (Scott Sonenshein)

I think the best way to convince reviewers/readers that my findings are credible is to write in such a way that they are drawn to the same conclusions that I am making in the paper ... I don't think credibility comes from tacking on a theory every time you give a quote to show its connection; rather, it comes from showing how the quote teaches us something new or elaborates theory in an interesting way. (Elaine Hollensbe)

Transparency

Because they do not rely on statistical tests or standardized procedures to assess and demonstrate the rigor of their studies, qualitative scholars often turn to transparency to

convince readers that their interpretations are plausible. Inductive researchers convey this rigor by providing detailed descriptions of the steps they took, from data collection procedures to final analyses. This transparency encourages readers to trust both processes and conclusions. Inasmuch, we treat transparency like an opening of the shades so that readers can envision the entire detailed research process, including important decisions made along the way and justifications for those decisions. Our respondents further develop this notion of transparency by noting that:

Despite many different approaches, the common pattern in the highest quality research is transparency and credibility. It's best to completely explain what you did and why you did it. This is especially important when there is not one standard 'template' for doing qualitative research. (Scott Sonenshein)

Most basically, I try to be really clear about what I did, why I did it, and where it led ... It is virtually impossible and I think generally inadvisable to take the reader through every analytic twist and turn (including the U-turns) that together make up the path to our findings, and which can all too easily become the path from rigor to rigor mortis for both the author and reader. But I always try to lay out the key pieces of the analytic process in my methods sections, and increasingly to acknowledge its non-linear and iterative nature (in case they do decide to try it at home). (Sally Maitlis)

Undoubtedly, the qualitative scholar is often consumed with this balancing act. What is meaningful and what is tedium? Perhaps the best route one can lay out is the path from beginning to end, less all of the ill-advised detours that lead one temporarily off course.

Volume and Depth of Data

It is apparent that strong qualitative data, or that which is purposively or theoretically sampled, supports one's story and enhances the believability of the written account, is essential to achieving rigor within a study. Depending on the study, however, it can at times become difficult to corroborate the

crucial elements we have discovered. Perhaps as significant as sample selection is the quantity, frequency, and diversity of the data that a qualitative researcher collects and utilizes. With regards to the former, Nelson Phillips suggests, 'The most common approach, in my experience, is to have way too much data in order to be able to unequivocally say you have enough'. Other of our colleagues expanded upon their criteria regarding data as follows:

As well as sampling for comparison (purposefully), it is important for rigor to collect data to saturation on each sampling key unit. This means collecting enough data from enough sources, and preferably multiple sources, enabling coverage of different perspectives for triangulation. (Ann Langley)

What I try to look for to make the study rigorous is I want to make sure that we are working with a lot of observations ... So this means that I'm going to follow the same people, or better yet, multiple people, over many, many days, ideally 6 months to a year. If you look at my papers, you will actually find that some of them contain counts of interaction patterns or counts of behavior that took place, when they took place, how they took place, and how often they occurred. For me that is a kind of empirical rigor. (Steve Barley)

Not only is having a sufficient amount of data necessary, but also including multiple and divergent data sources that produce convergent findings will likely benefit the perceived trustworthiness of one's results. Several of our informants address this dilemma by offering their approaches to making data more compelling, as follows:

My research is typically longitudinal, much of it conducted as if in real-time supported by data gathered from multiple sources that include archival materials, various kinds of text, interviews seeking real-time prospective and retrospective sensemaking, and my own ethnographic observations of the situation. (Raghu Garud)

When I look at others' papers (and I'm sure I'm guilty of this myself!), I see they have, say, collected interview data, done some observation or shadowing, and collected archival data. But 9 times out of 10 the findings section is entirely 'driven' by evidence from interview quotes. Why?

Because those are often the most direct/most readily captured snippets of data. But it sure is nice when an author also shows how the other aspects of their corpus of data were used, and brings these in to the findings section directly. That gives the reader a sense that ... authors have a really rich grasp of their setting and are conveying it more holistically through multiple sources. (Jennifer Howard-Grenville)

From these insights, we can infer that not only is having multiple data sources important for establishing a study's credibility, but also discussing these sources and how they contribute to one's findings can be equally significant.

Reflexivity

To ensure that the significance of researcher reflexivity is understood, we begin by referencing Charmaz (2006, p. 188), who suggested that reflexivity encompasses:

The researcher's scrutiny of his or her research experience, decisions and interpretations in ways that bring the researcher into the process and allow the reader to assess how and to what extent the researcher's interest, position and assumptions influenced inquiry. A reflexive stance informs how the researcher conducts his or her research, relates to the research participants and represents them in written reports.

The significance of reflexivity was addressed by Mats Alvesson, who offered, 'On the whole, I'd say that a high level of demonstrated reflexivity in research text is key for a credible study and I try to work with this', prior to further expounding:

Most notions of rigor deny complexity and ambiguity. I emphasize reflexivity and interpretive awareness. Attention is then given to how one does something with empirical material, thinking about fair but also interesting and novel aspects. Most good studies allow for several interpretations and it is important not just to let one's preferred framework guide work, but be open for the possibilities of thinking in new ways. (Mats Alvesson)

We found this to be of particular interest as there appears to be the suggestion that rigor

and reflexivity are somehow contradictory in nature. Furthermore, this thought was not entirely an outlier, as Suddaby noted:

So, while I am very much in favour of precision and discipline in our method and strongly believe that we need to be able to describe our methods accurately and transparently, I often feel that in order to comply with positivist standards of research, we end up doing so in a way that is not authentic or honest. And, after all, isn't honesty and authenticity what rigour is all about? Is there a way in which we can be true to our craft and still embrace bias or celebrate subjectivity? (Roy Suddaby)

We sense that this perception of reflexivity and rigor being antithetical largely hinges on differences in functionalist and interpretivist paradigmatic assumptions. The confusion arises as to the applicability of the term rigor. Klag and Langley (2013, p. 161) address this potential tension in their paper on making 'conceptual leaps' where they recognize that, 'During the conceptual leaping process, the bricoleur can embrace both "magic" and "science" (or imagination and discipline) as two parallel and important paths to acquiring knowledge'. Or more specifically, moving from data to theory often requires taking a leap that is not always an exact science, but rather can be entwined in ambiguity and creativity. Writing reflexively then would necessitate researchers to provide an honest account of how they moved from point A to point B, perhaps including how they themselves influenced (or 'biased') their findings. Thus, from an interpretivist perspective, writing in some of the 'magic' that took place throughout the research, along with the 'science', into the final account may best be considered as a means of strengthening rigor rather than detracting from it.

Transferability

Transferability is often considered a key component in achieving rigor in qualitative studies, and by some even to be the qualitative analogue of the quantitative-oriented

criterion of generalizability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) expounded upon this notion, asserting that transferability is a critical element in establishing trustworthiness and thus it is the researcher's responsibility to provide a thick description so that readers can begin to understand how the findings and insights gleaned from one study might be applicable to other contexts (thus increasing the usefulness of the study for the broader field). Given that many qualitative scholars select extreme samples and/or unique settings to study, transferability can sometimes be a challenging task, though one that is highly important to address, as indicated by the below remarks:

A critical concern with readers of qualitative process work is the question of generality or 'transferability'. I always include at the end of papers a section on 'boundary conditions' which although it may not have that precise title, examines the idiosyncratic features of the case that might have contributed to producing the findings and that draws on published literature to suggest contexts where similar explanations might be relevant. I find this a very interesting section to write as it can really add to the theoretical contribution and interest of the paper. (Ann Langley)

For single case studies, I try to reassure reviewers about two things. First, about the theoretical relevance of my setting, or, in other words, that the specific processes we observed (e.g. designers developing new concepts) reflect a more general phenomenon of theoretical interest (e.g. prospective sensemaking). Second, about the appropriateness of the site, or, in other words, that the site I selected represents an 'ideal' setting to study this particular phenomenon, because of its particular visibility, availability of data, etc. (Davide Ravasi)

Two major insights are available from the forementioned offerings. First, it is essential to separate the pits from the cherries; or in other words, if something within a study is probably not transferable, clearly say so. This will help avoid comingling and confusion, which could leave the reader questioning the overall value of the study. Second, when something is transferable, lead the reader down the path so that they clearly see how what is said is applicable away from the

framework of your story. Kreiner calls this ‘leaving a trail of bread crumbs’ for the reader and instructs his students to make sure that many elements of the paper show readers how to transfer the findings. Providing examples of other organizations, occupations, or contexts in which the findings transfer can go a long way in ‘selling’ the reader on the applicability of the grounded theory.

RIGOR IN SAMPLING, DATA COLLECTION, AND DATA ANALYSIS

The above discussions center on qualitative researchers’ interest in ensuring that their data analyses are conducted rigorously and/or that their written presentation conveys rigor to the reader. Although these are key to the broad scope of qualitative rigor, there are prior steps that should be embarked upon earlier in the study. In this regard, our informants have offered a set of practices that they have utilized in their own work and which we present as a series of tips and techniques to be considered by qualitative scholars when engaging in the sampling and data collection phases of one’s study.

Sampling

The selection of informants and/or data sources constitutes the foundation of rigorous qualitative research. This was highlighted by Ann Langley, who said ‘Rigorous research design means making sampling choices that enable the researcher to collect sufficient and appropriate data to answer the research questions adequately’. Another of our other colleagues provided his own perspectives:

Because inductive research requires methodological flexibility, I think rigor cannot be simply built into the design of a study alone. I think sample selection is key: does the sample offer the possibility of unique theoretical insights that align with the research question? (Spencer Harrison)

Our contributors offered an important distinction in that unlike our more quantitative-oriented counterparts, qualitative researchers often employ purposive as opposed to random sampling. This allows for a more criterion-specific analysis, rather than a broader and often less meaningful population-wide understanding. This is important, as including those with divergent views often contributes to a study’s rigor.

Iteration and Saturation

Many researchers stress the idea that qualitative research is not a linear process. Rather than methodically progressing from sampling and data collection to data analysis and then to writing, many qualitative scholars blur the lines between these ‘phases’ and instead use a process of iterating as discussed below.

Specifying ‘iterating’: My sense, as a reviewer, is that many qualitative researchers, especially first time qualitative researchers, think that inductive methods follow a pretty linear process of: sample selection, interviewing (along with gathering archival data), transcription, and coding. For me, that misses the point of the method. Inductive methods are meant to be flexible and to allow researchers to track down important dynamics as they emerge in gathering the data. If someone says something really interesting that is theoretically relevant, I need to adjust my protocols, maybe adjust my sample, and read more of the existing literature to fine tune my understanding of what is happening. If I wait until ‘coding’ my data, it’s too late to track down these ideas – I’ve missed my chance. So I try to be more open about what I’m doing when I talk about iterating. (Spencer Harrison)

Moreover, a key issue with qualitative work is deciding on whether to gather more data and how much of it to gather. Similar to other phases of the research process, our colleagues advocated that data collection decisions (including the amount of data to be collected) are – and should be – made on a case-by-case basis that reflects the type of study being conducted, the research questions asked, and the themes emerging from the data.

When other scholars ask me ‘how do I know if I have enough interviews for my qualitative study?’ I tend to reply ‘how do I know if my piece of string is long enough?’ – in other words, the answer is always ‘it depends what you are trying to do with it’. I have seen published studies with few interviews, and others with over a hundred. I have seen published studies that rely on ethnographic methods (immersion, observation, field notes) and no formal interviews. To me there is no number for ‘what is enough’ because it depends what the authors are studying and trying to find. (Jennifer Howard-Grenville)

A related sampling issue is the use of early and emerging data as informing additional data collection efforts. More specifically, rather than predetermining all sampling and data collection elements, many qualitative scholars allow their data to play an integral role in guiding their study. This allows researchers to pursue interesting themes that emerge in their data, regardless of prior considerations.

I refine my sample and protocols to explore what I am finding in my data. I often go ‘off road’ during interviews. My goal is to figure out what is important to the people I am studying. (Michael Pratt)

In addition, I take my cues from the data and follow up on interesting leads in subsequent data collection, rather than separating data gathering and analysis. (Elaine Hollensbe)

The above discussion is reflective of a primary theme in inductive research, i.e. that the data is far more than the starting point of analysis as it plays a crucial role in guiding one’s study. Novice scholars will benefit by recognizing that data is telling – suggesting new and/or different sources should be procured, how and when past theory is relevant and applicable, as well as when the point of saturation has been reached.

Coding

Coding is a process integral to the analysis of data and it is often the single most time-consuming element of one’s research project.

More specifically, Mike Pratt said, ‘I end up reading and coding my interviews multiple times. I want to really, really know my data’. Two things can be garnered through his observation. First, an extended coding process assures the researcher that they own their data in a sense that interpretation is exhausted, resulting in a coherent understanding that is ready to be shared. And second, coding is a fluid process involving continual updating and revisions as new themes or trends emerge. Rather than offering a ‘how to’ guide for coding, we find value in providing several approaches that our respondents conclude have aided them in achieving a rigorous analysis.

In most of my studies the core of the analysis is based on the coding of a body of text. I am increasingly convinced, however, that systematic coding of data is just as much a way to generate theory (by highlighting the building blocks of a model) as to verify intuitive interpretations that often pre-exist the coding efforts. The least I can do is to carry out the coding as precisely as I can, by reading and re-reading each transcript or each text several times; recoding when necessary; being meticulous about whether I do have robust evidence for provisional interpretations or not. (Davide Ravasi)

In our exploration of emotion in top team strategy meetings (Liu & Maitlis, 2014), the part that demanded more to achieve rigor was coding individuals’ expressed emotions and their strategizing processes. For the emotions, we first developed a detailed coding scheme incorporating facial, body, vocal and verbal cues, and then used this to code, frame-by-frame, the expressed emotions of each person whenever she or he spoke. Unusually for the research I do, we even had two people independently code these emotions to ensure rigor in our identification of them. (Sally Maitlis)

It is beneficial to supplement our colleagues’ thoughts by discussing the coding processes we (the authors) employ. We begin with the understanding that coding is not constrained to a standard scheme but can assume rather different appearances even among scholars pursuing similar methodological and research

endeavors. More specifically, under the Gioia methodology, Gioia and Corley have adopted a multiphase process of analysis in which freestanding 1st-order codes (often informant utterances) are uncovered in an initial, open-coding phase; then relationships among these codes are explored in subsequent axial-coding phases of analysis aimed at formulating 2nd-order theoretical themes (see Gioia et al., 2013). Conversely, the *Tabula Geminus* or ‘twin slate’ approach outlined in Kreiner (2016) utilizes a simultaneous open/axial-coding approach in which both ‘levels’ are identified simultaneously (i.e. 1st-order codes and 2nd-order themes) and noted in a coding dictionary during all phases of analysis (sometimes beginning with the first interview coded). There tend to be differences in the level of detail in the coding as well. Gioia and Corley tend to operate at a higher level of meaning in the coding than Kreiner (including even a metalevel ‘gestalt’ analysis that constitutes a search for, or creation of, some overarching explanatory concept, e.g. ‘sensegiving’ from Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991 or ‘identity ambiguity’ from Corley & Gioia, 2004). Kreiner and his co-authors, on the other hand, are inclined to operate at a more detailed, fine-grained level during the coding process, even though that detailed process often also ultimately yields a new overarching concept (e.g. ‘identity elasticity’ in Kreiner et al., 2015).

Rheinhardt takes both a top-down and a bottom-up approach in the data analysis phase. She first reviews audio recordings, as opposed to interview transcripts, with an ear for the total story an informant is conveying rather than a focus on answers to specific questions (somewhat of a top-down approach). Upon completing this process, she reads transcripts and implements a statement by statement coding process (more of a bottom-up approach). The first phase represents somewhat of a ‘gestalt’ analysis similar to that utilized by Gioia and Corley, while the second phase is more aligned with Kreiner and colleagues’ use of a more detailed coding scheme. The idea is

to first get a sense of the phenomenon that is occurring and then understand the underlying processes of how it is playing out.

A second divergence among the analytic approaches adopted by the authors of this chapter relates to the incorporation of relevant literature. Both Gioia and Corley advocate a stance of ‘assumed ignorance’ throughout the initial stage of analysis and therefore do not overtly incorporate past theory until later analytic phases. They justify this stance on the grounds that it allows greater revelatory opportunity and reduces the tendency for confirmation bias. With the *Tabula Geminus* approach, Kreiner and his co-authors (Rheinhardt included) overtly draw upon theory from the very beginning with the goal of providing analytic flexibility and increasing efficiency. Indeed, Kreiner chose the name of *Tabula Geminus* to openly reflect that grounded theorizing should draw on the ‘twin slates’ of data and existing theory.

Role of Others in the Research Process

Many of our informants recognized significance in including others in the analytical process. We see this participation in two forms. First, this involves returning to study participants for their critical input as a means of adding interpretative credibility. More specifically, one scholar noted that analysis can be strengthened, or made more rigorous, by:

[i]nvolving participants in the setting as much as possible. This means, as much as possible, having them co-author papers with me ... at the very least, contribute to the analysis and interpretation. I know that for some more positivist-oriented researchers, this is anti-rigorous. But for me it's important truly to understand setting members' perspectives throughout the writing process. (Jean Bartunek)

Although this approach called for extensive subject participation, other of our colleagues sought to employ their informants in a manner more reflective of verification, which is commonly referred to as member-checking. As an

example, Elaine Hollensbe said, ‘I share representations of the emergent findings (in presentations and reports) with the people I have studied to ensure that I have been true to the data and the participants’. Kim Elsbach added, ‘For validity, I take my findings back to informants (sometimes new informants from the same organization) and ask them if the findings seem correct, and if there is anything missing or concerning’.

Although there is the obvious value in calling upon study subjects to aid in analysis, rigor is often enhanced through a second participatory approach, by seeking input from those not directly involved in the study. One of our other colleagues noted:

A good way to ensure that your findings are rigorous, credible, and convincing is to be a student (even when you are a professor). Try to apprentice with someone whose work you admire, and read and deconstruct some of the many exemplary articles on qualitative research to see how they have gone about telling their stories ... I would strongly recommend doing qualitative research as a team. Doing collaborative qualitative research allows you to bring multiple views to bear on a set of data (which increases trustworthiness and verisimilitude) and can cut time off some of the steps in the process (e.g., interviewing, coding). (Elaine Hollensbe)

Involving others is both an indispensable verification tool and an expander of insight. An additional perspective can aid in directing meaningful interpretation so that rigorous outcomes can be derived (e.g. Masterson et al., 2016). Yet, as the plurality of these views suggests, there is a broad spectrum upon which the qualitative researcher can draw to aid in building and/or supporting their emerging findings and theories. At one extreme, although not specifically addressed, a scholar may conclude that an additional perspective and/or verification of their results is simply not necessary. Conversely, there are researchers, such as Jean Bartunek (referenced above), who welcome a significant level of participation and, in fact, embrace this as heightened rigor. We, as authors of this chapter, do not advocate any particular approach, but rather believe that the

individual qualitative scholar can best determine what will be most beneficial to their particular research endeavors.

Generating Theory

The ultimate goal of most inductive research endeavors is to generate a plausible, defensible theory and/or model or, at the very least, an interesting, relevant, and theoretically informative story. Reaching this final destination is typically challenging and often involves many twists and turns as we engage in thorough data analysis. Indeed, many qualitative researchers find it necessary or desirable to use tools such as memo writing, diagramming, and/or modeling to aid this process. This is exemplified in the following offerings:

One thing I try to do is ‘draw’ my data throughout the data collection and data analysis process. In many ways, a lot of the ‘iterating’ – a verb that is often talked about by qualitative scholars but rarely specified – is mediated by trying to visualize my data. For instance, I might conduct an interview and in the contact summary, I will try to diagram relationships that might have been described. (Spencer Harrison)

I use very primitive tools (print-outs of the texts, a pen, colored highlighters, and, later, Word tables), but I do not think that NOT using software like Nvivo makes my study less rigorous. Actually, I think it makes it MORE rigorous, because my primitive tools allow me – force me – to deeply immerse myself in the data, physically engaging with them, embedding them in my brain – and eventually it is our brain, not Nvivo, that traces connections and captures patterns in our data. (Davide Ravasi)

As recognized, these tools are of benefit throughout all stages of data collection and analysis as we again acknowledge that qualitative studies rarely, if ever, follow a linear process. Therefore, iterating is not only useful but often necessary in generating theory, as follows:

To ensure that I tell an interesting story that advances understanding, I similarly iterate between the data, emergent categories and model, and the

theory to which I hope to contribute. I unabashedly dive into the literature to see how existing theory might inform my theorizing, and how my theorizing might inform existing theory, and write memos to capture these connections. I do not impose theory on the data, but I note theoretical connections when I see them. This, in fact, ensures that I am not just writing an entertaining, descriptive story, but am contributing to scholarship in a rigorous way. (Elaine Hollensbe)

As a closing note, we add that Corley, Gioia, and Kreiner have all adopted a grounded theory methodology in which the theories they derive are generated directly from the individuals they interview and related data sources that inform the context in which their informants create and/or experience. Their analyses almost invariably comprise two ‘orders’, a 1st-order level that captures informant-centric terms/codes and a 2nd-order level that denotes researcher-centric theoretical themes and dimensions. Furthermore, their approaches generate an inductive model that is grounded in and emerges from the 1st-order data, which incorporates 2nd-order themes and aggregate dimensions, and serves as a graphic representation of the emergent theory.

CONCLUSION

The intent of this chapter is to serve as a meaningful guide for those working to achieve rigor in their qualitative research. We appreciate that there are additional conceptions of, challenges to, and criteria for assessing rigor that extend beyond what has been offered here. Furthermore, we should note that chapter-length constraints have precluded us from including all of the delicious snippets our contributors offered. We nonetheless hope that this compendium of observations and opinions can serve as a valuable launch pad for expanding the dialogue about achieving rigor in qualitative research. We conclude with two metalevel observations derived from our foray into how the notion of

‘rigor’ is constructed by a sampling of prominent qualitative organizational researchers. First, we recommend that those who write and teach about qualitative methods take a stand on *the need for rigor*, even though it can be so variously defined. As was made clear by all those we spoke with, there might be different ways to achieve rigor, but rigor you must achieve. We mustn’t let its variability impede its applicability. Second, we encourage our fellow qualitative researchers to be *transparent* about the steps they have taken in each study; share with the reader how you went about trying to achieve qualitative rigor – it can help future generations of researchers improve their work and sustain the ‘big tent’ approach to meaningful qualitative research.

Note

- 1 Gioia would like to note that he did not create this label, but that it was applied by other scholars who became aware of the methodology’s systematic techniques as it evolved over 25 years in collaboration with junior scholars like Mike Brown, Kumar Chittipeddi, Shawn Clark, Kevin Corley, Aimee Hamilton, Rajiv Nag, Shubha Patvardhan, Kristin Price, and Jim Thomas.

REFERENCES

- Bruner, J. (1991) The narrative construction of reality. *Critical Inquiry*, 18(1): 1–21.
- Charmaz, K. (2006) *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. (1st ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Corley, K.G. (2015) A commentary on ‘what grounded theory is...’: Engaging a phenomenon from the perspective of those living it. *Organizational Research Methods*, 18(4): 600–5.

- Corley, K.G. & Gioia, D.A. (2004) Identity ambiguity and change in the wake of a corporate spin-off. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 49: 173–208.
- Creswell, J.W. (1998) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Traditions*. London: Sage.
- Emden, C. & Sandelowski, M. (1999) The good, the bad and the relative, part two: Goodness and the criterion problem in qualitative research. *International Journal of Nursing Practice*, 5: 2–7.
- Gioia, D.A. & Chittipeddi, K. (1991) Sensemaking and sensegiving in strategic change initiation. *Strategic Management Journal*, 12: 433–48.
- Gioia, D.A., Corley, K., & Hamilton, A. (2013) Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research: Notes on the Gioia methodology. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(1): 15–31.
- Gioia, D.A., Price, K.P., Hamilton, A.L., & Thomas, J.B. (2010) Forging an identity: An insider-outsider study of processes involved in the formation of organizational identity. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 55: 1–46.
- Glaser, B.G. & Strauss, A.L. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago, IL: Aldine Publishing Company.
- Hammersley, M. (1987) Some notes on the terms 'validity' and 'reliability'. *British Educational Research Journal*, 13(1): 73–82.
- Klag, M. & Langley, A. (2013) Approaching the conceptual leap in qualitative research. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15: 149–66.
- Kreiner, G.E. (2016) 'Tabula Geminus': A 'both/and' approach to coding and theorizing. In Elsbach, K.D. & Kramer, R.M. (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Organizational Research: Innovative Pathways and Methods*, pp. 350–61. New York: Routledge.
- Kreiner, G.E., Hollensbe, E.C., Sheep, M.L., Smith, B.R., & Kataria, N. (2015) Elasticity and the dialectic tensions of organizational identity: How can we hold together while we're pulling apart? *Academy of Management Journal*, 58: 981–1011.
- Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Liu, F. & Maitlis, S. (2014) Emotional dynamics and strategizing processes: A study of strategic conversations in top team meetings. *Journal of Management Studies*, 51: 202–34.
- Masterson, C.R., Corley, K.G., & Schinoff, B.S. (2016) Innovation through collaboration: Working together on data analysis and interpretation. In R.M. Kramer & K.D. Elsbach (Eds.), *Handbook of Innovative Qualitative Research Methods: Pathways to Cool Ideas and Interesting Papers*, pp. 331–40. New York: Routledge.
- Mays, N. & Pope, C. (1995) Qualitative research: Rigour and qualitative research. *British Medical Journal*, 311(6997): 109–12.
- Morse, J.M., Barrett, M., Mayan, M., Olson, K., & Spiers, J. (2002) Verification strategies for establishing reliability and validity in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1(2): 13–22.
- Pratt, M.G. (2008) Fitting oval pegs into round holes: Tensions in evaluating and publishing qualitative research in top-tier North American journals. *Organizational Research Methods*, 11(3): 481–509.
- Tracy, S.J. (2010) Qualitative quality: Eight 'big-tent' criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16: 837–51.
- Watson, L.A. & Girard, F.M. (2004) Establishing integrity and avoiding methodological misunderstanding. *Qualitative Health Research*, 14(6): 875–81.

Writing for Different Audiences

Michael D. Myers

INTRODUCTION

Having conducted qualitative research for almost 40 years, I have now reached the conclusion that the writing up phase of any research project is probably the most important phase of all. The reason for this is that the only thing that most people see or learn from your research project is what you write about it. It is the written account of your project that lasts, long after the project has finished. Borrowing a concept from hermeneutics, the concept of autonomization says that, once words are inscribed in text, the text takes on a life of its own. It becomes objective. Hence the written account of a project is what lasts and is the only thing which most people see. Unless you write about it, everything else that you did tends to be forgotten over time.

Of course, there are other ways to learn about your research project. For example, if you present your findings at a research seminar or in a lecture, then I agree that some

people will learn about your work without having to read it; they will hear what you say about it instead. But the fact remains that only those who attend the seminar will learn about it (Myers, 2013). And realistically, most people will not remember much about your presentation later on. Of course, as a supervisor of PhD students, I have sometimes visited the research site and even met some of the people there. However, my visits have always been for a short time only, and certainly no other researcher has ever visited the research site. Hence the primary way in which I or anyone else learns about a research project conducted by one of my PhD students is what they say about it in their write up. I believe the same point applies to all qualitative research projects.

Therefore, it is almost impossible to over-emphasize the importance of good writing. What is written becomes reality – it becomes the objective story that is told. Of course I am exaggerating a little, since it is possible to write a second edition of a book, and

people might disagree about the meaning of the printed word. However, the point remains that once the article or book is published you have little further influence on how others interpret your work. Once the story is in print, that's it.

This suggests that qualitative researchers need to give careful consideration to writing. As Wolcott (1990) points out, writing up for a qualitative researcher is absolutely essential. But if we are going to write, we need to write well. This means trying to keep a few things in mind. First, we should try to ensure that what we write is interesting. Caulley (2008) discusses how qualitative researchers can make their writing more interesting through creative writing techniques, while Ely et al. (1997) discuss how research writing can be useful, believable and interesting. Second, since writing itself is a creative process, we need to decide what story we are going to tell. When we write we create a particular view of reality and decide what (or what not) to say (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). As Grills (1998) explains:

[i]n the writing, we make decisions about the story we will tell – how the tale will be made theoretically interesting, what questions we will engage with our work, and what aspects of our research will be presented and what will be set aside. Through this process, lived research and the experiences that accompany it are represented and mediated by text. (p. 199)

Third, what is considered to be interesting, the story that we tell, and the style we use to

tell it will vary depending upon the audience we are writing for (if you are interested in different writing styles, Van Maanen (1988) discusses the various styles that can be used in ethnographic studies, including realist, impressionist and confessional styles). In this chapter, therefore, I want to discuss writing for different audiences, focusing on those audiences that are especially important for qualitative researchers in business and management.

DIFFERENT AUDIENCES, DIFFERENT OUTPUTS

Although there are various ways to categorize the different audiences for our writing (Richardson, 1990), I suggest there are five main audiences for qualitative researchers in business and management. These five audiences are academics, students, business professionals, institutions/organizations and the general public. Each audience tends to read a different kind of output, as summarized in Table 31.1.

Academics

For most academics, the main audience for our research work is fellow academics in our own discipline. These academics might be researchers or teachers or a combination of both.

Table 31.1 Audiences and outputs

<i>Audience</i>	<i>Sub-groups</i>	<i>Preferred outputs</i>
Academics	Researchers, teachers	Journal article, conference paper, book, thesis
Students	Undergraduate, postgraduate, MBA and executive students	Textbook, teaching case, journal article
Business professionals	Professionals in one's own disciplinary area; professionals in other areas	Newspaper article, magazine article, book
Institutions/organizations	Civil institutions such as trade unions, companies, and government and non-government organizations	Report
General public		Newspaper article, magazine article, book

The outputs for an academic audience include journal articles, conference papers, books and book chapters, theses, case studies and various teaching-related materials. When writing for academics, one of the most important things to bear in mind is that these people are likely to be experts in, or at least reasonably familiar with, qualitative research. This means they will be expecting you to demonstrate your own familiarity with the qualitative research literature and your expertise with your chosen qualitative method.

Students

A second audience for our research work are students. The students can be undergraduate students, postgraduate students, and/or MBA or other professional students. The outputs for this audience include textbooks, teaching case studies, and possibly teaching notes for the instructor. Of course, postgraduate students should also be reading academic journal articles, particularly if they are studying for a research masters or PhD.

Business Professionals

A third audience for researchers in business and management are business professionals, and especially those working in the same discipline (e.g. professionals working in human resource management if you are an HR academic). Since business professionals are always busy and are easily bored with the academic style of writing, the preferred outlet for this audience is the magazine article. Business professionals might read a book on the plane or when they are on holiday, but in this case the book still needs to be practical and engaging, not too laden down with theory. Of course they will also read newspaper articles. Since most business professionals like stories, probably the best qualitative research method to talk about with this audience is case study research.

Institutions/Organizations

A fourth audience for researchers in business and management are various institutions and organizations. These institutions/organizations might be companies, civil institutions such as trade unions, and government and/or non-government organizations. The preferred type of output for this audience is usually a report. This report is often commissioned by the organization. The report might be confidential for a certain period of time, particularly if the entire research project has been funded by them. For government funded research agencies, there might be no restrictions on publishing the research findings, although they will still want to see a report on the research project by the due date.

General Public

A fifth audience for researchers in business and management is the general public. Like business professionals, the general public like stories, so probably the best qualitative research method to talk about with this audience is case study research. People like to read stories, particularly if the case study findings are about a reasonably well-known person or organization. The newspaper article is probably the output of choice for communicating with the public, although magazine articles and books might also be useful.

As well as the outputs I have mentioned, there are many others: for example, blogs, websites and various social media outlets such as Twitter or Facebook. Each of these types of output has its own writing style and genre. Depending upon your chosen field and institution, some writing styles, genres and outputs may be more acceptable or valued than others.

A WRITING PLAN

Regardless of the audience and the type of output, I have found that it is always worthwhile to have a writing plan. One possible writing

plan is to use a modified version of the template that I mention in my book (Myers, 2013). This modified template lists nine items that should be considered at the start of a research project (Table 31.2). I suggest that you attempt to fill out this template as soon as possible, before you even begin collecting your data. This is because the template helps to focus your mind on the end product (the written output). Collecting qualitative data is very interesting, and I find it one of the most enjoyable aspects of doing qualitative research, but the template should help you to stay focused on the ultimate goal. Your ultimate goal should be to write up your research in a research output of some sort (e.g. a thesis or conference paper), and then publish it (if appropriate). The questions included in the template are designed to help you stay focused. Lack of focus is one of the biggest risks in doing qualitative research (Myers, 2013). In my experience as an editor, lack of focus is also one of the main reasons why manuscripts are rejected for journal publication.

- 1 **Title?** Can you come up with a title that captures the purpose and contribution of the work? Is it catchy? Is it sufficiently interesting to entice readers to start reading the rest? Sometimes I come up with three or four alternatives before deciding.
- 2 **Purpose?** Can you describe the purpose of the article or book in one sentence? If you cannot describe the purpose of your research in a succinct manner, the most likely reason is that you are not entirely clear about this yourself.

In qualitative research, one of most common purposes is to explore a relatively new topic in depth or explore a previously existing topic area from a new angle. It is less common for a qualitative piece to test a theory or to claim that it provides a definitive answer to a longstanding problem.

- 3 **Authors?** Who are the authors? This question is not appropriate if you are the sole author of the work (e.g. a thesis); however, if there are multiple authors, it is very important to discuss who they are going to be from the beginning. It is best to sort out authorship and the order of authors early, to avoid disputes later. I think it is very important for at least one of the authors to be very familiar with – if not an expert in – the qualitative research method used.
- 4 **Audience?** Who will read the output? Once you know, then you can write for this audience. For example, if you are writing a PhD thesis, then the most important person is your own supervisor or committee, followed by potential examiners. It is very important that these examiners should have some expertise in qualitative research; if they do not, then the danger is that these examiners might use inappropriate criteria to judge your work. I hope that your supervisor is able to nominate the appropriate people. If you are planning to write a journal article, then take a look at the editorial review board and see what kind of research the journal publishes. It is always a good idea to have specific people in mind when writing up. In fact, if you are able to suggest reviewers, I strongly recommend doing so. Just as with the examiners for a PhD thesis, you want the people reviewing your work to be sympathetic to – and have expertise in – qualitative research.

Table 31.2 A writing template (adapted from Myers, 2013)

<i>Nine questions</i>	<i>Description</i>
1 Title?	What is the title of the thesis, article or book?
2 Purpose?	What is the purpose of the article or book?
3 Authors?	Who are the authors of the work and what is their contribution?
4 Audience?	Who is the intended audience for the work?
5 Method?	What research method am I planning to use?
6 Publication outlet?	Which journal, conference or book publisher will I submit the work to?
7 Theoretical contribution?	What is my proposed theoretical contribution?
8 Practical contribution?	What is the practical relevance of my work (if any)?
9 Materials included?	What materials should be provided?

If you are writing a commissioned report for a government or non-government organization, you need to be very clear about the scope and focus of the report required. This might require meeting with the people concerned at the start and possibly when you have written your first draft. It is quite common for government officials to want to be briefed on the findings and possibly have some input to the final report before it is made publicly available.

- 5 **Method?** Which research method will you use? You need to have good support for whichever research method you are planning to use in your own institution. This includes having a good supervisor, i.e. a person who is 'qualified' and has the experience and expertise to do the job. It also includes having the right research training before you start the work, e.g. perhaps being able to take one or more courses on qualitative research.
- 6 **Publication outlet?** What is the most appropriate publication outlet for your research work? If you are considering writing up your work as a journal article or conference paper, then I suggest you start thinking about writing for that particular outlet from the start. This will affect the sort of topic you choose, your research method and the style of writing. For example, the style of writing for an academic journal is very different from that required for a magazine or newspaper article. In a journal article it is generally frowned upon to exaggerate or make any claims that are unsubstantiated by any evidence. In magazines and newspaper articles, however, it is more important for the written piece to be short and sharp and to grab the reader's attention. This often means it is impossible to provide all the evidence (e.g. references), which can be seen as boring by the editor and readers. They just want the findings without all the detail.
- 7 **Theoretical contribution?** What is your theoretical contribution? This question is important because it is a requirement of most of the top journals in business and management for research articles to make a good contribution to theory. As Siggelkow (2007) points out, a purely descriptive study is a hard sell. Needless to say, business professionals and the general public are unlikely to be interested in your theory.
- 8 **Practical contribution?** Is there some practical relevance to your work? If you are planning to write up your research solely for a top academic journal, this may not be so relevant; however, I think it is still a useful exercise to think about

practical relevance. Practical relevance is of course essential if you are writing a magazine or newspaper article.

- 9 **Materials included?** What materials do you need to include? If you are writing a PhD thesis or an academic journal article, then you definitely need to include an extensive set of references. I recommend using a bibliographic software program such as Endnote, Mendeley or ProCite to help organize these. The examiners and reviewers of a qualitative piece will also want to see some qualitative evidence. For example, if you have conducted interviews, then it is always a good idea to include some pertinent quotes from interviews in your article; if you have conducted an ethnographic study, then it is a good idea to include excerpts from your field notes. By contrast, if you are writing for a business magazine or newspaper, you definitely do not want to include too much detail. In a PhD thesis or book you would also be expected to include a table of contents, list of figures and tables, references and possibly an index, but you would definitely not want to include any of these items in a newspaper article.

I am sure there are additional questions that can be considered when writing up your research, but I believe the nine questions listed in Table 31.2 are the most relevant questions for qualitative researchers in business and management (Myers, 2013). How you answer these questions will help to determine the format and style of writing you adopt. For example, if your research method involves analysing data thematically, then the way you write up your findings will be different from someone who has analysed their data chronologically as a series of events. The former is likely to write up their findings organized by topic, whereas the latter is most likely to write up their findings as a narrative. If your publication outlet is a conference paper, then the length will usually be shorter than a journal article, which in turn is much shorter than a book; a newspaper article might just be one or two pages. If your work makes a limited theoretical contribution, then a top academic journal might not be the most appropriate outlet; on the other hand, if your research makes a good practical contribution,

then a magazine or newspaper article for business professionals or the general public might be best. Hopefully all nine questions will help you to focus your work appropriately and succeed in writing well.

WRITING FOR EACH AUDIENCE

I will now discuss in detail how to write for each audience. Fortunately, I have been able to write and publish my own work for all five audiences and been involved as an editor and reviewer as well, so hopefully I can pass on something that I have learnt along the way.

Academics

For most academics, the main audience for our research work is fellow academics in our own discipline. If you work in a research-oriented university, the most important output in all the business and management disciplines is the peer-reviewed journal article. Although in some disciplines other outputs such as books and conference papers might be highly regarded, in business and management it is the peer-reviewed academic journal article that is the most important. The journal article is the currency for promotion and tenure, with the more highly ranked journals counting the most. In many countries there are ranking lists of journals and in some cases these ranking lists can have a significant influence on someone's academic career and/or determine the amount of funding the university receives from the government.

The first point I want to make is that manuscripts submitted to academic journals are, as a general rule, read by academics only. Hence the audience is relatively small, usually limited to those academics with a particular interest in the same subject area. This means at least one of more reviewers will be very familiar with – if not an expert in – your chosen qualitative research method.

The second point is that all articles submitted to an academic journal go through a process of peer review. This process is often double-blind (i.e. the author does not know who the reviewers are, and the reviewers do not know who the author is). This peer-review process exists in virtually all academic disciplines and is assumed to give some assurance of quality. If the findings are judged to be significant and robust by one's peers (other 'experts' in the field), then the manuscript will be accepted and published as a new contribution to knowledge. If the findings are judged to be insignificant and not robust, then a manuscript will be rejected. The peer-review process varies from virtually nil in lowly ranked journals to very tough in the highly ranked journals.

There are a few important points to note about the peer-review process. First, by definition the peer-review process is a social process. Peer review involves having your work evaluated by other people. Second, the peer-review process is subjective. When a reviewer reads a paper, they bring their own background and experience to bear on your work. From hermeneutic philosophy we learn that everyone has their own prejudices (Myers, 2016). Third, these subjective reviewers, especially at the top journals, are likely to be regarded as experts in the topic and/or the research methodology by researchers in the field. Some if not all of them will have published in that same journal before. Fourth, the reviewers are appointed to their task by the editor in charge of your manuscript. In my experience editors tend to appoint reviewers who they know and trust to do a good job, i.e. those who have already published a paper in the journal and/or have reviewed for the journal before. These reviewers understand the style of the journal and the standard of research work that is required. Of course, who is chosen can make a big difference to how your paper is evaluated.

Taking all these points together, I suggest a journal can be seen as something like that of a social club: the people involved in a particular

journal as editors and reviewers have all paid their dues, they tend to know each other reasonably well, and they know the current state of play. There are exceptions, but the same people seem to crop up over and over again as authors in the same outlet. They are members of the club in good standing.

If you accept the metaphor of each journal being like a social club, then the most important question becomes: how can you become a member of the club?

The first way to become a member of a club is start playing the game. Playing the game is not limited to submitting your own papers; playing the game also means offering to review the papers of others. Many PhD students and junior faculty members make the mistake of thinking that they are too busy to review papers by other people, since they really need to spend as much time as possible on their own work. They think to themselves that they do not have time to review papers for journals. But this is flawed logic. It turns out that the benefits are counter-intuitive. The more reviews you complete, the more you get to know your audience and the review process; the more reviews you do, the more you get to know the current state of play in your field; and the more involved you get, the more you get to know what the editor and other reviewers think. Also, the more reviews you do, the better you get at writing your own work: you get to know your audience and you get to see the common mistakes that people make in their writing. Seeing the mistakes that others make helps you to eliminate these mistakes in your own writing.

The second way to become a member of the club is to pay your dues. Writing a good review, one that the editor and author will value, takes time and effort. Writing your own paper also takes work. Paying your dues means that you have contributed sufficiently to that particular journal that your efforts are recognized by someone more senior than yourself (e.g. by an associate editor if you are a reviewer, or by a senior editor if you are an associate editor).

The third way to become a member is to socialize with the other members of the club. You need to join the conversation and become a part of it. In my own case I consider it essential to attend a few conferences each year, where I know that the best qualitative researchers in my field will be. I have met all of my co-authors and virtually all of the editors of the journals in my field at these conferences. And while I might not know all of them very well on a personal level, at least I know what kind of qualitative research they do (if any) and what they are currently interested in. Amongst this group of people some topics and methods are fashionable, whereas others have ceased to be interesting. I highly recommend the article by Gerard Cachon about what it means for a research article to be interesting (Cachon, 2012). Although he mostly talks about his experience in the field of operations management, his article is relevant for all the business and management disciplines.

A fourth way to become an active member of the club is to team up with someone else, ideally someone who is already a member. I have found collaborating with other scholars to be very rewarding, from both a personal and scholarly point of view. Each person brings a different set of skills and experience to the game. I don't think I could ever have published in the top journals in my own field if I had not collaborated with others, others who were more senior than me and already well experienced in playing the game.

All these ways of becoming a member of the club will help you to understand your audience better: what they like, and what they don't like. Hence I consider it essential to know who the editors are at a particular journal, and while I might not know exactly who the reviewers are, at least I like to have some idea as to the kind of person they are likely to be. A good guess is people who have published on a similar topic and/or method before in that same journal. I like to know what kind of research they do, the style of paper published in that particular journal,

and what topics are currently fashionable (or might be in the future). In a similar vein to what I have just said, Clark and Thompson (2016) suggest five tips for publishing qualitative research in high impact journals.

One thing that all the best peer-reviewed academic journals in business and management like is theory. Every top-tier journal in business and management requires a good contribution to theory, otherwise the paper will be rejected. Making a theoretical contribution means more than just being a part of the conversation, but actively shaping it (Corley & Gioia, 2011). In qualitative research we rarely test theory; rather, we tend to use it as a sensitizing device to make sense of the findings. Alvermann et al. (1996) discuss some of the problems in distinguishing between levels of theory when writing up qualitative research.

Another thing they like is a good literature review. A good literature review does not simply summarize everything that it is possible to know about a topic, but is focused on identifying a gap in the literature. Typically, a paper will then seek to ‘extend the literature’ or ‘fill this gap’ identified in the literature review. As long as the literature has identified an interesting problem or gap (and not all gaps are interesting), then the literature review has fulfilled its purpose. An alternative to finding a gap is to ‘problematize’ something that has, until now, been taken for granted. Problematizing involves thinking differently about a commonly accepted ‘truth’ in a particular field and turning it into a (perhaps unwarranted) assumption. An interesting paper questions this assumption.

A third thing they like, especially important for qualitative work, is for the findings to be credible or plausible (Klein & Myers, 1999). A qualitative researcher needs to demonstrate that they have a good understanding of the social and cultural world that they have studied. Clifford and Marcus (1986) discuss how this can be achieved when writing about culture. Pratt (2009) says that to write a compelling and focused account for

an academic journal, qualitative researchers need to write an article that (1) honours the worldview of informants, (2) provides sufficient evidence for claims and (3) significantly contributes to extant theory (Pratt, 2009). He suggests that authors need to make sure their research methods section includes the basics, they need to show data in smart fashion, they should think about using organizing figures and they need to tell a story (Pratt, 2009). I have found that one way of demonstrating plausibility is to include at least some direct quotations from interviews. Reporting verbatim what someone said gives a certain amount of credibility to your work and as long as they are selected carefully, such quotations can help to make the story more interesting (Myers, 2013).

A fourth thing that all peer-reviewed academic journal articles like is the corollary of the previous point, i.e. qualitative researchers need to make sure that the purpose of their paper is crystal clear. A common problem with writing up qualitative research is that the researcher ends up with far too much data, only a fraction of which can be included in a relatively short journal article. It can be challenging trying to figure out what to include and what to exclude. A common mistake is trying to cram the ‘the whole story’ into just one article. If such a strategy is adopted, the article tends to have many purposes, not just one, and ends up being a mishmash of many ideas with no clear point. One solution to this problem is to tell just one part of the story in one particular paper. For example, if you are writing up a case study, then you have to decide what angle you are going to take. The advantage of this strategy is that it then becomes possible to write a few papers from the one study, each written from a different angle. If we combine the previous point with this one, then the key thing is to write a paper with one clear purpose, while providing just enough evidence to convince the readers that your findings are plausible. If you provide too much evidence, then your reviewers might get lost in the detail; if you provide too

little evidence, then your reviewers might say your findings lack depth.

A fifth thing that all qualitative academic journals like is for the researcher themselves to demonstrate reflexivity, a certain self-awareness of their own subjectivity (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). This adds both to the credibility of the work and the researcher.

There are differences in the requirements for an article in a top-tier academic journal as contrasted with more lowly ranked journals. Pratt (2008) says that for the top-tier North American journals, there are three major tensions. These are:

- (a) the need to both break away from and be firmly embedded in extant theory; (b) the need to both provide enough data so that a reader can draw conclusions, while also providing enough interpretation of that data; and (c) the need to be both detailed and transparent with regard to one's methods, while also fitting one's research into the format of a top-tier North American journal. (Pratt, 2008, p. 485)

For other types of journals, I have found that there is often no requirement to break away from extant theory – it is perfectly acceptable to use existing theory. I have also found that the requirement to interpret the data is not as stringent as for a top-tier journal, and that the description of one's research methods need not be as detailed.

To summarize, if you are considering writing a journal article, you need to be socialized into the social club of whichever journal you are targeting. Research is a social as well as a rational scientific process and therefore you need to become a part of the conversation. Becoming a contributor to the conversation means at a minimum knowing what the current debates are and who is actually conversing. Hence it is not a great idea to submit a paper to a journal when you do not know the people at all and you have not actually read any of the papers that the journal has published. Editors get frustrated when a paper is submitted by an author who has no real understanding of the style or standard

of research expected. If you are still unsure about the fit of your proposed research within a particular journal, then ask someone who has some experience with that particular outlet for some advice (Myers, 2013).

Another output that is important for all academics is the PhD dissertation. The PhD is regarded in most countries as the entry qualification for an academic career. Although PhD students spend a few years on their research project, at the end of the day only a few people actually read the thesis: your advisor/supervisor(s), the examiners (often just two people), and a close friend or relative who proofreads it for you. Hence the audience for a PhD thesis is even smaller than that for an academic journal article. However, the same advice that I have given earlier about journal articles applies to a PhD thesis. In other words, you need to know what your supervisor likes and does not like, you need to have a good literature review and identify a good problem/gap, plus you need to have a good theoretical contribution. Typically, the examiners will be people who have published before in your area, hence the process will be much smoother if you are already a member of the club (by doing some of the activities mentioned above). Your supervisor should make sure that these people are sympathetic to – if not experts in – your chosen research method.

Although not everyone agrees with me, in recent years I have become an advocate of the 'thesis with papers' model. Unlike the traditional book format, a thesis with papers requires a student to write three to five papers. These do not necessarily have to be published beforehand, but they should at least be good enough to submit to a journal and/or conference in the opinion of your supervisor. Of course, the thesis still needs to be a coherent body of work with an introduction and conclusion that ties everything together, but the main contribution of the thesis is contained in the papers. One advantage of this new model is that if the papers are submitted somewhere beforehand, the student learns

about the peer-review process and gets some external feedback. One disadvantage is that there tends to be some repetition amongst the papers, since each paper needs its own literature review, research methods section, etc. But overall, I think the advantages of a thesis with papers outweigh the disadvantages.

If you are a postgraduate student writing a thesis, I suggest you look at some of the recent theses produced in your own department or school. Ideally, I suggest only looking at those that are considered to be excellent examples. Previous examples are always helpful in showing what is required (Myers, 2013). Another suggestion I have is to write out an extended table of contents. I would show this table of contents to my supervisor to make sure that you are on the right track.

Other outputs that might be produced for an academic audience include conference papers and books. In most disciplines conference papers do not count for much, but in the field of information systems (like computer science) they are regarded as important. In such a rapidly changing field, conferences are where the latest thinking is presented (since a journal article usually spends a few years in the review process). The immediate audience for a conference paper are the program chairs, track chairs and reviewers. Once again, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of knowing the people involved, i.e. at least knowing what sort of research they do, the current debates they are involved in, etc. For qualitative researchers this means attending conferences where excellent qualitative research will be featured, such as the International Federation of Information Processing Working Group 8.2 conferences in information systems, or the Critical Management Studies conferences in management. Earlier in my career I made the mistake of attending the wrong type of conference, conferences where very little qualitative research was presented. But at the right conference, you might be inspired by other qualitative researchers and, even better, some of them will turn up to hear your presentation. I

have often found a future potential co-author immediately after a presentation (theirs or mine). If we discover in subsequent conversation that we have similar or complementary interests, this can lead to future collaboration.

Another output is a book. Books typically represent an in-depth treatment of a particular research topic or methodology, or contain a set of chapters by various authors looking at a topic from different perspectives. Hence in a book it is important to demonstrate depth, for example by including quotes from interviews, or if you have done a grounded theory study, by showing how the findings emerged from the data. I have found that the review process for a book is completely different from that used for a journal. Often a book publisher will ask you to write a proposal for a book, and then they will obtain reviews from other qualified researchers on your proposal. I have found these reviews to be very helpful. However, once the book is finished, often there are no reviews at all, or at most a review by an editor. The peer-review process thus occurs right at the beginning stage for a book, rather than at the end.

If you work in a teaching-oriented university, then a few other outputs might count in addition to conference papers, journals and books. Textbooks, case studies designed for teaching, and other teaching-related materials may count as well. These outputs can be an important contribution to knowledge dissemination. Although the main audience for these works will be students, fellow academics are also an important audience since they are the ones that ultimately decide which readings to recommend. Academics are the gatekeeper for their own syllabi. Personally, I consider teaching-oriented materials to be very important since this is one of the ways in which our research findings are translated into practice. Assuming our curriculum is up-to-date, then all our students who graduate should be familiar with the latest techniques and ideas and, hopefully, they will use some of these when they get a job (or create their own).

Students

A second audience for our research work are students. The students can be undergraduate students, postgraduate students, and/or MBA or other professional students. Most outputs written for students tend to be teaching oriented such as textbooks and teaching cases.

The ideal person to write a textbook is someone who is actively involved in teaching at the appropriate level. In my own case, for example, I used to teach the introductory first year course at undergraduate level and at the time wrote some teaching cases to accompany the textbook. But since I have not taught this course for almost 20 years, I would not be confident writing for this audience today. I am no longer plugged in, as it were, to that age group or social network, and so really have no first-hand knowledge of what they like or do not like. My sources of information are all second hand.

On the other hand, I am familiar with current postgraduate students, since I continue to teach at this level at my own university. My previous experience as associate dean for the entire business school also helped me to become familiar with many of the students in all the business disciplines, not just my own. This experience gave me the confidence to write a textbook for this wider audience (Myers, 2013).

MBA and/or professional students are probably little different from other business professionals, so I tend to think that the same points I make below about the latter apply to them. The only proviso I would make is that I think our professional students should be encouraged to read academic journal articles so that they can understand some of our theories. If all doctors are expected to keep up with the latest medical research and use the latest treatments, then why should business professionals be any different? We might not be treating patients, but we often do make recommendations that will affect the life of an organization. For MBA and professional students, therefore, while case studies might

be very appropriate, I think case studies that illustrate a theoretical point are even better.

Business Professionals

A third audience for academics in business and management are business professionals. Usually the ones that might be interested in our work are those working in the same discipline (e.g. professionals working in human resource management if you are an HR academic). There are many business magazines, from well-known global ones such as the *Harvard Business Review*, to local ones such as *The Business Magazine* in the United Kingdom.

Articles written for business professionals need to be written in a different style to those written for an academic audience, but the general principles are the same. That is, you need to be aware of the current fashions/debates amongst the practitioner community. Business people have their own conferences which they attend, and so just by looking at the agenda of the latest conference you can see what the hot topics are. I like to attend these conferences from time to time so that as well as knowing what the current topics are, I get to meet them as well.

Business professionals tend to prefer practical articles rather than theory-laden ones. This is not to say that theory is completely absent, but it just needs to be treated in a different way. It needs to be explained clearly without going into too much detail. The usual academic style of writing – of being guarded, tentative and not dogmatic – does not go down well with practitioners. They like to see us make some recommendations or at least spell out the implications of our work (Wolcott, 1990).

Business professionals also like case studies or brief examples that they can relate to. This means that qualitative researchers need to write a good story. This story should be interesting and compelling for the audience; it should grab their attention and make them want to read the article from start to finish.

In summary, when writing for business professionals, you need to be familiar with your audience. It certainly helps if you are teaching in the MBA or another executive program, but if not, attending a practitioner conference is certainly a worthwhile investment. Anything you write also needs to be engaging for this audience and relevant to the current topics of the day.

Institutions/Organizations

A fourth audience for academics in business and management are various institutions and organizations. These institutions/organizations are companies, civil institutions, and government and/or non-government organizations that tend to commission a researcher or research team to write a report on a specific topic. The institution/organization will usually specify the focus and scope of the project and the timeframe within which the project should be completed.

In writing such a report it is important to consider the audience and follow the guidelines for the report carefully. For example, if you are writing a research report commissioned by the government, you may be required to submit a draft first and brief the relevant government officials on your findings. If you are writing a report for a company, they may require the results to be kept confidential. These kinds of situations can lead to ethical dilemmas, especially if the findings are somewhat critical of government policy or company strategy, etc. Since most academic researchers want to publish their findings, keeping the written report a secret can go against the grain.

Therefore, I think it is important for researchers writing such reports to consider the consequences of doing so right at the start; make sure you know the audience for the report, and make sure that their requirements and your expectations are aligned.

In my own case, since my overriding interest is always to publish the findings, I make a

point of clarifying this requirement at the very beginning of any research project. If needed, I am happy to change names and various details so as to hide the identity of the organization, but for me the goal of most projects is to publish and contribute to the ongoing conversation in my discipline. I acknowledge that this may not always be the case for everyone writing a commissioned report.

General Public

A fifth audience for academics in business and management is the general public. I define the general public as anyone who is not a business professional in our area of expertise, e.g. if you are a marketing academic, a lawyer.

The newspaper article is probably the output of choice for communicating with the public, although magazine articles and books might also be useful. Once again, if you are thinking of writing a newspaper article, it pays to know your audience. That is, it pays to be familiar with the current topics and debates in the mass media. If your chosen research area is directly relevant to a current hot topic, then now is an ideal time to write a newspaper article. Hopefully your article can provide a different spin or some insight on an important topic. The key to a newspaper article is to keep it snappy and relatively short. The main point should be crystal clear. Newspaper editors are not fond of writing that contains too much jargon, is not well focused and is too long. Newspaper editors also tend to like stories and opinion pieces, especially one that will grab the public's attention.

Personally, I think it is important for academics to contribute to public debate, especially if the government is thinking of introducing some new policies. We should contribute and not stay silent. Of course, the politicians might not agree with us, but we should at least contribute to public debate if we have the expertise and opportunity to do so.

Badley (2015) makes a few useful suggestions about how qualitative researchers can make their research more accessible to general audiences. For example, he says that qualitative researchers should avoid writing in a way that is 'lumpy, heavy, and pretentious' if we want to enter into a fruitful dialogue with a wide range of readers.

Dunleavy (2016) explains how it is possible to write a blog post based on a journal article in just a short space of time. He says that a blog post helps to create external impact for one's work amongst a far wider audience than just academia.

CONCLUSION

Writing is a creative process that involves telling a good story that is relevant and interesting to a particular audience. As authors, the challenge we have is knowing what might or might not be interesting to someone else. What is interesting and relevant to one audience might be boring to another, and vice versa.

I have suggested that becoming part of the academic social club is one of the best ways of getting to know the academic audience. A qualitative researcher is someone who contributes to the field and is engaged in a conversation with fellow academics. But this does not mean that we can write fiction. As qualitative researchers, we rely on qualitative data and we have an ethical responsibility to report our findings honestly. We also have the responsibility of providing a plausible or credible account of the social and cultural world that we have studied. This does not mean that we have to agree with everyone in the club. In fact, as I said earlier, one of the ways to make a contribution is to question one or more taken-for-granted assumptions. We might be able to point out problems with current thinking and move the field forward. Hence we do not have to agree with everyone.

It goes without saying that writing for students is also important. Nowadays students

are our 'customers', especially in countries where they pay high fees, plus they also need to be taught the latest thinking in a particular discipline. Students are potential future business professionals and a few of them might become academics.

As well as academics, we can write for business professionals. Although the academic audience is the most important one in terms of promotion and tenure, it is also important to write for business professionals. This is especially so in a management or business school where we need to develop good relationships with the business community. Writing for this audience is one way of helping them to stay up-to-date with the latest research in our chosen field, but can also lead to engaging with them in other activities (e.g. participation in a future research project, sponsoring a research centre or participating in a careers evening for students).

It can also be very worthwhile writing for various institutions and organizations. These (usually commissioned) reports can make good use of our expertise and can make a contribution to public policy or help a company in some way.

Not all academics will have the inclination or the temperament to write for the general public, but those that do often find it a rewarding experience. It can be a way to inform public debate and to let people know what you and/or your research centre is doing.

No matter which audience we are writing for, however, we do have to write well. If our writing is poor, whatever we say will be misunderstood or ignored. One of the secrets to writing qualitative research in an interesting and engaging way is to be clear about your purpose and to have a good idea as to why your topic is important for your audience.

REFERENCES

- Alvermann, D.E., O'Brien, D.G. and Dillon, D.R. (1996) On writing qualitative research, *Reading Research Quarterly* 31(1): 114–20.

- Badley, G.F. (2015) Blue-collar writing for fruitful dialogue? *Qualitative Inquiry* 22(6): 510–17.
- Cachon, G. (2012) What is interesting in Operations Management? *Manufacturing & Service Operations Management* 14(2): 166–9.
- Caulley, D.N. (2008) Making qualitative research reports less boring: The techniques of writing creative nonfiction, *Qualitative Inquiry* 14(3): 424–49.
- Clark, A.M. and Thompson, D.R. (2016) Five tips for writing qualitative research in high-impact journals: Moving from #BMJnoQual, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 15: 1–3.
- Clifford, J. and Marcus, G.E. (1986) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Corley, K.G. and Gioia, D.A. (2011) Building theory about theory building: What constitutes a theoretical contribution? *Academy of Management Review* 36(1): 12–32.
- Dunleavy, P. (2016) How to write a blogpost from your journal article in eleven easy steps. <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactof-socialsciences/2016/01/25/how-to-write-a-blogpost-from-your-journal-article/>.
- Ely, M., Vinz, R., Downing, M. and Anzul, M. (1997) *On Writing Qualitative Research: Living by Words*, London: Routledge/Falmer.
- Grills, S. (1998) *Doing Ethnographic Research: Fieldwork Settings*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Klein, H.K. and Myers, M.D. (1999) A set of principles for conducting and evaluating interpretive field studies in information systems, *MIS Quarterly* 23(1): 67–93.
- Myers, M.D. (2013) *Qualitative Research in Business & Management*, 2nd ed., London: Sage.
- Myers, M.D. (2016) Hermeneutics in Organization Studies, in: Mir, R., Willmott, H., Greenwood, M. (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy in Organization Studies*, New York: Routledge, pp. 113–24.
- Pratt, M. (2009) From the editors: For the lack of a boilerplate – Tips on writing up (and reviewing) qualitative research, *Academy of Management Journal* 52(5): 856–62.
- Pratt, M.G. (2008) Fitting oval pegs into round holes, *Organizational Research Methods* 11(3): 481–509.
- Richardson, L. (1990) *Writing Strategies: Reaching Diverse Audiences*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Richardson, L. and St. Pierre, E.A. (2005) Writing: A method of inquiry, in: Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd ed, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 959–78.
- Siggelkow, N. (2007) Persuasion with case studies, *Academy of Management Journal* 50(1): 20–4.
- Van Maanen, J. (1988) *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Wolcott, H. (1990) *Writing up Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ethics Creep from the Core to the Periphery

Emma Bell and Nivedita Kothiyal

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on ethical oversight regimes that are intended to regulate the conduct of management researchers. These regimes are based on ethical principles and rely on the application of bureaucratic procedures and processes, enacted via university governance frameworks. They are intended to ensure that principles, such as informed consent and protection from harm, are applied and maintained. While ethical regimes in social science research originated in the United States in the 1970s, over time they have been exported into other cultural settings, initially Canada, the UK and Australia, and more recently to developing economies and indigenous cultures (Den Hoonaard, 2011). Ethical regulation is thereby assumed to be universally applicable and beneficial irrespective of cultural context. This universalist approach overlooks core-periphery relations and postcolonial conditions that divide the world unequally; the core comprises Western countries

in the global north while the periphery is comprised of developing nations in the global south (Westwood et al., 2014).

Here we draw on data from a qualitative interview study of management research in India,¹ to investigate how ethical regimes are experienced by management researchers in this context. This forms part of a broader study that explores how the globalization of management research shapes the methodological practices of qualitative and quantitative management researchers in India, including their ethical and political choices. Our analysis explores the process of methodological globalization in management research, whereby methodological norms, values and practices developed in the Anglo-American context are diffused throughout the world (Gobo, 2011). The study seeks to take into account postcolonial power relations between scholars in the global north, mainly North America and Europe, who are seen as the primary creators of management knowledge (Alatas, 2003), and management scholars on the periphery, encompassing regions of

the world like India that share a colonial past (Ibarra Colado, 2006; Prasad, 2012).

For management researchers, the dynamics of research globalization are also related to the expansion of business education, including in developing countries such as Brazil (Alcadipani & Caldas, 2012) and South Africa (Nkomo, 2015). International business school expansion has led to the increased dominance of global business school ranking systems which place pressure on researchers to publish in highly ranked, international journals that predominantly publish quantitative positivist research (Mingers & Willmott, 2013). Our analysis highlights the neo-colonial power relations entailed in the globalization of management research (Kothiyal, Bell & Clarke, forthcoming) and normalizing particular notions of scientific rigour in such contexts (Bell et al., 2017).

By paying attention to the voices of management scholars on the periphery, and reflecting on our experience of navigating complex ethical regimes in our own study, we provide insight into the problematic nature of ethical oversight and the kind of compliance that these regimes encourage. We suggest that the normalization of research ethics encourages researchers to abandon local, contextually relevant ethical principles in favour of Western ethical codes. Through this, the chapter endeavours to raise broader questions about ethical practice in management research, encompassing fundamental issues about the purposes to which research, is put and the responsibilities of the researcher (Bell & Willmott, 2014). In so doing, we seek to explore alternative conceptions of research ethics that are more sensitive to differential power relations than ethical regimes encourage.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF ETHICS CREEP

Methodological choices encompass the methods that management researchers use,

the ontological and epistemological positions they adopt, and the ethical decisions they make in designing and conducting their research. This includes choices about how to engage with research subjects or participants and how data collected from people and organizations should be treated. Since the late 1990s, management researchers in Anglo-Saxon countries have become increasingly subject to formal systems of ethical regulation in the form of national and international regulatory frameworks that regulate the conduct of social scientific study. This trend can be traced back to the 1950s, when initially in the US, and then in Canada, Australia and the UK, ethical oversight regimes for social scientific research started to become increasingly formalized and closely regulated, in part as a response to moral panic precipitated by a few high-profile disturbing psychological experiments such as Milgram's (1963) obedience studies.

The principles that inform these ethical governance structures – protection from harm, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity – are widely assumed to be universal. Compliance with research ethics codes, such as those produced by the Academy of Management,² the British Sociological Association³ or the UK ESRC,⁴ is now a requirement of many national and international funding bodies, and some management journals. A growing number of management researchers in European, Australian and North American universities are required to submit their research plans for approval to an ethical review committee or Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to the commencement of a project. Where research is externally funded, researchers need to demonstrate that effective university-level ethical regulation systems are in place before funding is released.

Yet in the UK, ethical regimes for the regulation of social scientific research are relatively recent. Only since the introduction of the ESRC Research Ethics Framework in 2005 has it been a requirement for UK

social scientists to have ethical procedures equivalent to US IRBs. Some suggest these trends are driven by mimetic isomorphism (Dimaggio & Powell, 1983), as social science organizations like the ESRC try to enhance their legitimacy by emulating what has become normalized in the natural sciences, such as health research (Dingwall, 2006). The adoption of risk management practices from the private sector has also encouraged UK universities towards reputation management, by trying to closely control the behaviour of their internal members in order to manage external reputations. This had led to the suggestion that research ethics committees in UK universities are primarily an instrument of organizational reputation management, by preventing organizationally sensitive research from taking place, (e.g. on students' engagement in sex work or links to terrorism), because this might adversely impact the university's reputation (Hedgecoe, 2015). Such decisions, Hedgecoe suggests, centre on protection of the institution's interests from potential harm, rather than protection of research participants or academic freedom. This has implications for research that explores power relations in organizations, including Critical Management Studies (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992).

For social science researchers in universities in the global south, compliance with ethical procedures is an increasing expectation in research collaboration arrangements with institutions/universities of the global north. This includes research funded by international development and aid agencies, as this is a route through which ethical regimes become normalized and diffused into research practices in the global south (Den Hoonaard, 2011; Sato, 2013). This has led to concern about 'ethics creep' (Haggerty, 2004), a process whereby the bureaucratic structure of ethical regulation colonizes new groups, practices and institutions, and at the same time expands its remit to incorporate a widening conception of what constitutes an ethical issue. A number of related criticisms

have been levelled at ethical oversight regimes. These centre on:

- ethical review committee members' lack of research experience and the secrecy that surrounds committee composition and practices (Den Hoonaard, 2011);
- inappropriate imposition of a biomedical model of research that follows the sovereignty of the positivist natural science paradigm and promotes a distanced, objectivist research stance that is insensitive to qualitative-interpretive study (Dingwall, 2006);
- notions of potential harm applied in a social science context where risks of harm are much less than in the biomedical sciences (Dingwall, 2006; Thorne, 1980);
- the time-consuming and dysfunctional nature of bureaucratic review processes which encourage detachment from humanitarian values (Bauman, 1989; Bell & Wray Bliss, 2009);
- unintended consequences of ethical regimes which encourage researchers to see ethics as a paper-based, tick-box exercise and a hurdle to be overcome, rather than an ongoing and essential feature of the research process (Sin, 2005);
- export of a research ethics model from scholars in the global north to those on the periphery without substantive dialogue and suitable modification (Riessman, 2005).

A further concern relates to the role of ethical regimes as a distinctive type of managerial rationality that is oriented towards achieving accountability in a risk-averse context where there is declining trust in public institutions. As Power (1994) notes, audit can become a practice where temporal and spatial distance from the practices to which it is applied results in dislocation, creating a 'ritual of inspection' wherein the establishment of a system whose operations can be verified becomes more important than the operations themselves. Ethical regimes can thereby become self-referential; a reification of the thing they are intended to represent.

Ethics creep is also criticized for having led to increasing homogenization of research methods in the social sciences and a reduction in the diversity and richness of these

disciplines (Den Hoonaard, 2011). Evidence suggests that some social science researchers in the UK and elsewhere have changed their research designs in response to anticipated or experienced difficulties in gaining research ethics approval. For example, Richardson and McMullan (2007) discuss the impact of ethical regimes on studying the UK National Health Service (NHS), particularly in situations where the research must go through more than one research ethics committee (where a study spans more than one organization it may have to go through a separate NHS Research Ethics Committee review in each case). This can be an extremely time-consuming process, led by medical practitioners who may be unfamiliar with social science methods, and involving different committees that sometimes give contradictory and conflicting advice. This is of particular concern to researchers who use naturalistic methodologies, such as ethnography and action research, where the context and nature of study is more difficult to predict than in studies using positivistic methods, like surveys and field experiments.

An additional critique suggests that research ethical regimes represent a form of authority wherein the researcher becomes an object of control. Within this, the exercise of technologies of examination, confession, guidance and correction are oriented towards gaining control of the subject (Foucault, 1980). First, the researcher is required to submit their research plans to a bureaucratic, institutional process and to show they understand, and are able to replicate, the stylized language favoured by these regulatory bodies, often using standardized forms and rules provided. Having provided information about their research, researchers are then contacted, usually via a letter to the researcher which communicates the outcome of the process. Finally, it is not uncommon for requirements for amendment to be issued, and sometimes for numerous iterations to be required before a research project is approved (Den Hoonaard, 2011). From a Foucauldian perspective,

ethical regimes can be understood as a form of governmentality which relies on coercive and non-coercive strategies to promote desirable behaviour in subjects through use of these techniques and processes. This ideology is predicated on the notion of the self-interested, autonomous, rational subject. Notions such as informed consent are formed by this neoliberal discourse.

Hammersley and Traianou (2014) argue that the focus on the autonomy of the research participant that ethical regulation encourages means insufficient attention has been paid to protecting the autonomy of the researcher. They argue that ‘what is and is not ethical in dealing with other people must be judged in the context of the distinctive obligations built into the role of researcher, rather than simply being assessed in terms of general ethical principles’ (Hammersley & Traianou, 2014, p. 233). This includes researchers questioning the ethical judgement of institutions, including funders and ethics committees.

In addition, the notion of informed consent assumes that autonomous action is possible. Yet from a Foucauldian perspective, agents are constituted in and through sociocultural forces; this implies that unconstrained individual choice is impossible (Hammersley & Traianou, 2014).

A final critique relates to the possibility that ethical oversight regimes and the normalization of research ethics encourage researchers to abandon local, contextually relevant ethical principles in favour of Western ethics codes. Ethical oversight regimes rarely consider the possibility that ethical principles may not be universally beneficial or that their meaning may be interpreted differently depending on the cultural context of study. In the remainder of this chapter we explore these issues in greater depth by focusing on the principle of informed consent, which we use to highlight the core-periphery dynamics associated with ethical regimes. We begin by introducing the principle of informed consent and outlining the model of the human subject on which it

is based. Next, we introduce our interview study of management researchers in India and discuss the ethical issues that it raised for us as researchers, and as a topic of discussion for our respondents. Finally, we introduce some alternative notions of research ethics that draw on notions of indigenous knowledge and decolonizing methodologies.

INFORMED CONSENT AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE AUTONOMOUS HUMAN SUBJECT

The principle of informed consent is conventionally thought to have developed in reaction against clinical trials carried out in Nazi concentration camps during World War Two (Hoeyer, 2009). The Nuremberg Medical Trials of Nazi doctors responsible for those experiments led to the development of the Nuremberg Code (1947). This sought to define legitimate research on human subjects and provide a universal standard for human experimentation. It later formed the basis of the Helsinki Declaration, developed by the World Medical Association, which provided the basis for a broad consensus surrounding ethical principles in the biomedical research context, including through the principle of voluntary informed consent, which seeks to ensure that the research participant has freely agreed to participate in the study and provides them with the opportunity to withdraw their consent at a later stage. Hoeyer (2009) suggests that the extent to which informed consent has travelled since the 1960s is a reflection of its success as an ‘organizational recipe’ that has broad appeal. Yet the atrocities committed by Nazi doctors occurred despite the existence of precedents to the Nuremberg Code, which had no effect in preventing experiments on prisoners (see also Dingwall, 2006). Hoeyer (2009) argues that this narrative constitutes an institutional myth which is presented as a remedy to a problem.

The transferability of informed consent as a universal ethical rule relies on its unproblematic presentation as a panacea that provides positive results irrespective of local context and without sufficient critical reflection on the ethical dilemmas and tensions that this gives rise to (Shamim & Qureshi, 2013). This provides the basis for widespread standardized ethical guidance such as the following:

Informed consent entails giving sufficient information about the research and ensuring that there is no explicit or implicit coercion ... so that prospective participants can make an informed and free decision on their possible involvement. Information should be provided in a form that is comprehensible and accessible to participants, typically in written form (or in a form that participants can access after the end of the research interaction), and time should be allowed for the participants to consider their choices and to discuss their decision with others if appropriate. The consent forms should be signed off by the research participants to indicate consent. (ESRC, 2015, p. 22)

The method that is widely recommended to ensure prospective participants are fully appraised of the research and their rights within it (including to withdraw consent at any time), is the information sheet and consent form (Coomber, 2002). According to the UK Data Archive, the information sheet should cover the purpose of the research, what is involved in participating, benefits and risks associated with taking part, and terms for withdrawal. It also covers issues relating to data usage and ethical precaution, as well as contact information in case of question or complaint. The consent form is a separate document that is signed by the participant. The form:

[s]hould be written in plain language free from jargon. It should allow the participant to clearly respond to each of these points:

- the participant has read and understood information about the project
- the participant has been given the opportunity to ask questions
- the participant voluntarily agrees to participate in the project

- the participant understands that he or she can withdraw at any time without giving reasons and without penalty
- procedures regarding confidentiality are explained (use of names, pseudonyms, anonymization of data, etc.)
- separate terms of consent for interviews, audio, video or other forms of data collection
- use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving are explained
- signatures and dates of signing for the participant and the researcher.⁵

Informed consent requires that the researcher considers whether the participant is 'capable of understanding all the potential risks involved' (ESRC, 2015, p. 44); without this, consent is not considered 'valid'. The intention is to enable a dual purpose to be communicated about the need to respect the autonomy of the individual, and the need to protect them from potential harm arising from research (Hoeyer, 2009). Guidance typically states that 'where participants are not literate, verbal consent may be obtained but this should wherever possible be witnessed and recorded'. While the guidance states that 'highly formalised or bureaucratic ways of securing consent should be avoided in favour of fostering relationships' (ESRC, 2015, p. 43), throughout, emphasis is placed on providing information in 'written form' and for these forms to 'be signed off by the research participants to indicate consent' (ESRC, 2015, p. 42).

A number of critiques have been offered of informed consent, as conceived in these ethical guidelines. Informed consent is based on a construction of the research subject that encourages participants to be viewed as fragile and needing protection (Den Hoonaard, 2011). Yet management research often involves studying powerful individuals and organizations, where there is less need for protection from harm than when researching more vulnerable subjects (Bell & Bryman, 2007). In some circumstances, there may conceivably be a case to be made for exposing powerful research participants (organizations and individuals), to a degree of potential

harm, especially when a case can be made that this is in the public interest. Thorne (1980) argues that some participants, such as vulnerable groups, may be more deserving of informed consent than others, including powerful elites. Informed consent can, in some cases, increase the level of perceived harm to which a participant is exposed, by requiring them to sign a document which can compromise their anonymity (Thorne, 1980) by requiring them to write their name and sign a form that is kept by the researcher and may be seen by other people. It is further argued that the different 'experiential worlds' (Thorne, 1980, p. 288) that research participants and researchers inhabit may mean they may be uninterested in listening to or reading information about the study, instead favouring 'partial truths'. Informed consent also focuses on a participant's right to say 'no' to being studied, rather than on their right to say 'yes'. Thorne's (1980) example of a group of mental patients who were prevented from being studied because hospital administrators did not give consent to access the institution illustrates how the formal process of gaining informed consent can effectively silence the less powerful rather than empower them. The extent to which consent is voluntary can be difficult to ascertain in natural fieldwork settings where researchers are observing everyday activities, such as participant observation or ethnographic study. These contexts, often involving many participants, do not lend themselves to moments of announcement and choice (Thorne, 1980).

Some researchers in the global south (Shamim & Qureshi, 2013) suggest that ethical guidelines fail to account for power relations that render conceptions of voluntary/willing participation in the research process, as well as withdrawal from it, highly problematic (Asif, 2010; Qureshi 2010; Rarieya, 2010). In some cultures, research participants may view participation as a personal favour to the researcher, and may be uninterested in the findings (Bhattacharya, 2007), or regard a direct request for an interview as rude

behaviour (Smith, 1999). But the insistence on signed consent forms is impervious to diverse settings and (sub)cultural differences within which research is conducted, including with non-literate or semi-literate research participants (Asif, 2010). The signed consent form is also insensitive to honour and sanctity associated with verbal (in preference to written) consent in some cultures, even if the research participant is literate (Qureshi, 2010). In these contexts, the act of granting informed consent by the research participant may emanate more out of cultural mores of honouring the relationship with the researcher (established through requests from friends and contacts), than from comprehension of, or agreement with, the research objectives stated in the informed consent sheet.

Ultimately, consent is argued to be contingent and situated. It cannot, therefore, be adequately addressed by getting participants to sign a form (Sin, 2005). Ethical regimes promote a bureaucratic approach that assumes the future can be anticipated and sufficient information about this provided to participants, including prediction of risks that could potentially arise in a research project. This, argues Sin (2005), is unrealistic. Instead, consent is an ongoing process of negotiation that must be sensitive to context, including how definitions of consent are operationalized by the individual with whom the researcher engages (Sin, 2005). A further problem arises when the bureaucratic procedures surrounding consent become ritualized and fetishized, resulting in dysfunctional consequences (Den Hoonaard, 2011). Examples include a researcher conducting an autobiographical study being required by an ethical review committee to sign a consent form for his own study, and a researcher analysing public photos in newspapers who was told to gain consent from every individual who appeared in the images (Den Hoonaard, 2011).

A final problem of relevance to our analysis here relates to the heightened sense of individualism that informed consent promotes through the requirement to respect the

autonomy of the research subject. This draws upon Western cultural values about the modernist subject as a bounded, rational, autonomous agent whose relationships to others are causal (Smith, 1999). These ideas, rooted in modernist, Western cultures, can encourage interviewees to narrate themselves according to a dominant discourse of subjectivity which they may not subscribe to (Alldred & Gillies, 2012). As Alldred and Gillies (2012, p. 142) observe, 'the very idea of interviewing someone is rooted in particular understandings about what being a person is, about communication between people and about how knowledge can be generated by the posing of questions by one and recording of responses by another'. The notion of informed consent assumes and reinforces this notion of subjectivity through a Cartesian concept of cognition as operating independently of emotion according to principles of abstract rationality. Yet Respect for this culturally specific notion of individual autonomy is presented as a universal truth (Hoeyer, 2009).

An example that illustrates the relationship between culturally specific understandings of subjectivity and research ethics arose during a workshop on action research organized by the second author and her colleagues in India. The workshop participants were local development practitioners doing action research with subaltern (i.e. dalits and tribal) communities in India. One practitioner narrated an experience involving the Musahar community in Bihar in a project which aimed to improve their access to state welfare schemes. Officially classified as scheduled castes, the Musahars and Paswans are concentrated in Northern India, particularly Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, and are commonly described as dalits. The Musahars are an extremely marginalized caste group from Bihar, who work mainly as bonded, landless, agricultural labourers. They are often described as 'dalits among dalits', and have little access to state-led development interventions which are usurped by local elites and landlords (Kumar, 2006; see also Singh,

2013, on how they negotiate and contest marginality on an everyday basis). Paswans are placed higher in the caste hierarchy, and more importantly, owing to wider social and political mobilization, wield greater power at the local level. The development practitioners hypothesized that it was a lack of self-worth, a result of centuries of caste-related stigmatization and poverty, which prevented Musahars from accessing these schemes that had been specially designed for them. As part of their research, they decided to use a modified form of Rosenberg's (1965) self-esteem scale to measure the self-worth of community members. The researchers administered a questionnaire to the Musahar people and completed a scale-based questionnaire themselves (as the respondents were non-literate). The team told a number of stories in the workshop relating to the difficulties in collecting meaningful data using this method. First, although the questionnaire was meant for individual respondents, the Musahar people answered the questions in groups. Second, for many questions it was very difficult to elicit any response from the Musahar respondent, and most often it would be a Paswaan (another disadvantaged community but a little higher up in the caste hierarchy in comparison to Musahar), who would give the response on behalf of the Musahar, who would then second it. This example draws attention to the difficulties in applying the principle of informed consent as based on a Western concept of the autonomous research subject.

STUDYING RESEARCH PRACTICES

Our awareness of the tensions involved in negotiating research ethics was further heightened through our own experience of applying for ethical approval for this study, a requirement of the UK-based project funder and the first author's university. This was in contrast to the experience of the second

author, based at an Indian higher educational institution where ethical review was not required, (although since the time of our study there have been moves to introduce an ethical review process as a consequence of recent international collaborations with a US university). While the UK university's ethical review guidelines state that the application should include a copy of the study information sheet and participant consent form 'if applicable' (sample templates provided), consistent with findings from other studies of ethical review processes (Den Hoonaard, 2011), conversations with colleagues at the institution who served on the committee, or had applied for ethical approval in the past, suggested that this was a tacit norm to which compliance was expected. We took account of this guidance and devised a standardized information sheet and informed consent form for the study. Consistent with other accounts (Den Hoonaard, 2011), our experience of the ethical review process was of a bureaucratic, document-heavy process involving two rounds of committee review that took two months from initial application to final approval, with outcomes and requests for modification at each stage being communicated formally to the researcher by letter.

Our semi-structured interview study involved 35 management researchers employed as Professors, Associate Professors or Assistant Professors in Indian Institutes of Management, universities and private business schools in India, in addition to a smaller number of respondents who were part of the Indian management research diaspora (management academics employed in UK or US universities). In this chapter we focus on the 31 management researchers in India. Interviewees were asked a range of questions relating to their methodological and research practices, including about their research training, empirical and theoretical preferences and publishing experience. Interviews were carried out either in person or via Skype, by either one or both of the researchers. Interviewee accounts were anonymized, a standard condition for ethical approval at the

first author's institution; in the analysis that follows we therefore use pseudonyms.

While we were interested in exploring issues relating to research ethics with interviewees, we were struck by the spontaneous way in which this topic emerged, often as a result of us presenting interviewees with the study information sheet and consent form (usually sent by email in advance of the interview to enable full consideration of our request). These accounts included respondents' reflections on their own research practice, including explanations of how they handle ethical issues in the research process, as well as reflections on how they felt as respondents being asked to comply with a formal ethical review process for the purpose of our study. While all of the interviewees were willing to sign the form, a number took this opportunity to observe the differences between Indian and UK/Western research ethics practices, using the example of our consent form to illustrate. Analysis of these accounts led to identification of the three themes presented below.

Informed Consent as a 'Western' Practice

Ethical guidelines for Indian social science researchers in the field of health⁶ emphasize the need for a 'common framework' to combat the perception that there is an 'indifference to ethics' in social science health research in India, calling for ethical principles and guidelines for research 'to improve and strengthen the system and environment in which research is conducted'. Enshrined within this is the principle of autonomy and the need for informed consent, although it is acknowledged that in India it 'may not be possible to obtain signed informed consent of participants'. While these guidelines call for 'organizational mechanisms' for the review of research ethics, stating that this is not something that can be 'left to the discretion

of individual researchers', they make clear that ethical oversight regimes for management researchers are a lighter touch in India than in countries like the UK. Several interviewees were dismissive of the principle of informed consent and the use of universal codes of ethics as the basis for institutional ethical regimes which they associated with the West.

This whole idea of informed consent, that's a minor issue, that's a trivial issue as I see it, it's more of an institutional requirement in the Western Academy. (Amrit, Professor)

Rather than reflexively considering the implications of ethical regimes and the possibility of developing 'contextually relevant and professionally sound ethical codes for conducting research' (Qureshi, 2010, p. 94), interviewees tended to dismiss this as irrelevant to their context.

In organisational research in India we do not have ethics committee[s]. (Durga, Professor)

No, we don't have anything like that in India, and in fact, when you sent me that sheet to sign, I thought oh my God ... I was a little surprised ... we don't have all that. (Rajni, Associate Professor)

While interviewees were conscious of changing expectations in relation to research ethics governance in India, this was seen as an external requirement imposed by the global north, rather than a necessary consideration from a 'praxis or critical consciousness perspective' (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012, p. 66).

The only reason ... it would make sense now, [is] because globally it's a requirement and everything is so stringent, so perhaps it's a good idea to do that, so the researcher doesn't really fall into any problems. (Rachna, Assistant Professor)

Some interviewees expressed scepticism concerning our use of the consent form as a reflection of a bureaucratic approach to ethics. They were eager to discuss less formal ways of negotiating 'socially produced'

informed consent that were more sensitive to local power relations and cultural context.

In my doctoral work I [did] not take the kind of informed consent that you have taken here. Mine was more of a pragmatic legitimacy ... I have ... questions about the whole [ethical review] process ... [it] is a very institutionalised process. (Anu, Assistant Professor)

They also contested our approach to informed consent by invoking alternative moral principles of reciprocity and care:

I am a big sort of fan of consent ... I think it can be done less formally ... in a conversational format ... We need to ... find our own ways of doing it, but ... given the fact that we have even higher likelihood of power distance, it is very important that we ... establish [on] some level that we are equals and I am depending on you and you're depending on me. So, there is a little bit of interdependence ... So it may not be a formal signature based thing. (Annidita, Professor)

Signing Away Trust

A second theme relates to the relational nature of some South Asian cultures (Qureshi, 2010) and the need for researcher–participant relationships based on trust. The formal process of requesting informed consent is seen by our interviewees as a threat to the development of trusting relationships between researcher and participants. Paradoxically, the use of a consent form was interpreted as an indication, and a cause, of lack of trust, rather than a means of enhancing trust between the researcher and participant. This was especially the case in studying women research participants in rural communities, as one respondent who had used feminist research ethics in her work suggested:

There is no need for this [informed consent form] in our culture because we work more on trust. If the respondent trusts you, they will almost tell you everything. You know, they don't want any assurance further than that. They trust you, and certain things won't come through, even if you get this signed. If they don't want to disclose ... and [you]

make them sign this ... they will not say anything because they are always worried that they are vulnerable ... So this instrument is not going to make much of a difference to anything. With this, nothing more is going to happen. Without this, nothing less is going to happen. (Kaveri, Professor)

In such contexts, oral consent can be 'associated with personal honour and integrity of the speaker' (Qureshi, 2010, p. 86). Insistence on a signed consent form is seen as jeopardizing this relationship, and can have the opposite effect leading the respondent to feel disempowered.

The moment I put it in this [form], does it affect my data collection process? I think so ... the moment I give them [this] I raise suspicion. (Ahmed, Professor)

I think it is not relevant in the Indian context because he [research participant] agreed to talk to me. It implies that he has given his consent, so I can develop a form and I can ask him to sign, but I think in the real context ... this kind of signing will [scare him and not give him feelings] of right, entitlement ... It will make [the research participant think] 'okay, I cannot deny things', whatever I have said. (Dipesh, Assistant Professor)

This highlights the complexities and subtleties surrounding the building of trust in research relationships. Bhattacharya's (2007) feminist account focuses on dilemmas she faced in dealing with a research respondent who insisted that she 'trusted' the researcher to do whatever she wanted with the data. This caused Bhattacharya to reflect on whether, by 'following the rules' surrounding informed consent, she was failing to honour the relationship she had built with her respondent. However, ethical regimes take little account of relational trust and the researcher's interpersonal relationship to research participants, instead focusing on contractual establishment of parameters intended to prevent data misuse. This is predicated on an inherent mistrust of researchers as unable to exercise moral judgement without the presence of rules and systems of regulation that are intended to protect participants from such abuses.

Bureaucracy as Neo-Colonial Oppression

Our final theme focuses on the historical, cultural and political context within which views of informed consent are formulated. British colonial rule in India was enabled by the imposition of a legal system that enabled regulation and domination of 'others' (Cohn, 1996), while in contemporary India, state bureaucracy is suggested to be a mechanism for the exercise of biopolitical control (Gupta, 2012). Bureaucracy can therefore invoke painful memories of the colonial past and present-day struggles with neo-colonial capitalism for subaltern populations still affected by epistemic violence (Spivak, 1999) and associated with the 'civilizing mission' of Western, imperialist modernity. Formal documents that rely on legalistic language and requests for a signature can therefore invoke suspicion on the part of the respondent:

That's what our culture is. We are very much suspicious, so when you are taking a signature, they may be suspecting that you may be putting somewhere something else, because I have signed. So let's say for example, I have signed, and you have misquoted me, or you have not printed those exact statements that I have told ... that will be my suspicion, so I'll be extremely careful when I'm talking. I'll be extremely careful how I'm responding ... You are asking me to become more serious ... psychologically you are trying to build pressure on me. All the time, back of the mind, I'm thinking that I have signed. So, you have made me become conscious. (Chinmaya, Associate Professor)

Just as an example, if [my participants] see this [indicating study consent form], I will have more questions. If [they] read all this, they say, 'this is too much! Why are you asking me all these things?' ... Since I know what this is for, I'm okay with it, but if you give this to a [Indian] manager, he will say ... 'you are asking me to sign some legal document? You know, I'm hesitant to do that'. So it brings in a bit of reluctance. (Srinivas, Professor)

As these quotes suggest, rather than protecting participants from potential harm, obtaining a signature is likely to be viewed by

participants as lessening their control over the research process and the uses to which their data is put. Put differently, there is a perception that they are signing away their rights, rather than signing to protect them. While we cannot comment on whether or not research participants share these views, this suggests that a bureaucratic approach to informed consent has the potential to generate the reverse effect from that intended.

It will, depend ... on the education levels of the audience ... in case of rural areas, you know ... getting any documents signed by ... people, even if you're translate into their local language ... asking them ... [to agree] to participate in the research, I think it might lead to some troubles for the researcher, because ... by bringing in documents ... which we want them to sign ... I think that the impression ... you're giving is ... 'why are you getting a document signed?' Because you are not a government authority, [why] are you doing that? So, [that will give a] bad impression. (Vinayak, Assistant Professor)

Informed consent ... in [the] sense [of] a form that you have sent to me? No, that I have not done ... some of them ... they don't know how to read and write ... Whenever they see paper and something is on there, they become more suspicious. (Souvik, Associate Professor)

As the following quotes suggest, Indian researchers see informed consent, based on a notion of the universal modern research subject, as inappropriate in engaging with some groups of research participants, particularly indigenous communities in postcolonial contexts.

Oral informed consent fits in with the various contexts of research in India, unlike written consent, which would be perceived as alien and officious by many of the poor. (Nandini, Professor)

When I said I doubt, what I meant was ... the form you [sent] to me and then I have to tick it in many places, I doubt if it will work with the people, the kind of research that I do ... I doubt if I would have taken this form to my villagers and then I ask them to sign on this form, because signing is also something which is perceived in a very different way ... Because if I am taking the signature, while I was using my computer, my laptop, there was a story

going on in the village that I talk to people and then I feed everything in the laptop, and one day you will lose your land. (Gautam, Assistant Professor)

In this quote, we interpret Gautam to be articulating a deep suspicion held by his research participants about the motives of researchers like himself who require compliance to bureaucratic procedures, fearing that he may use this to trick them, such as into unwittingly signing away ownership of their land. Similar reactions have been observed in other studies, of women activists (Den Hoonaard, 2011) and Asian factory workers (Dingwall, 2008). Participants can become fearful or offended by being asked to sign a consent form, the use of legalistic language causing them to respond hostilely or to withdraw from the study, and this can cause researchers to abandon the study. However, we suggest these effects are compounded by distrust between subaltern populations and the researcher, which the formal language of an informed consent sheet cannot bridge. The requirement of ethics regimes for bureaucratic informed consent could result in reluctance to study disempowered participants such as those described here. This is likely to restrict the development of local or indigenous management knowledge (Jackson, 2014).

DECOLONIZING RESEARCH ETHICS

The ethical procedures that ethical regimes mandate are insufficiently adapted to particular research participants and cultural contexts. This potentially encourages management researchers to study individuals who are socialized into Western values that prioritize the autonomous human subject. The focus on individual autonomy discourages consideration of alternative conceptions of the social agent as a being whose identity is constructed relationally or collectively as part of a larger community. This

approach to consent is passive rather than active, assuming that obtaining a person's signature on a consent form constitutes the primary basis for involvement in a study.

Universal approaches to research ethics reinforce 'neo-colonial assumptions about the ability of the expert academic researcher to apprehend the native's point of view ... treat the researched as a colonized people ... that the expert researcher can assume to "know them and what is good for them better than they could possibly know themselves"' (Said, 1978, p. 35, also cited in Bell and Wray Bliss, 2009, p.79). This lack of cultural reflexivity runs counter to principles of indigenous research which seek to acknowledge and redress neo-colonial power relations that have resulted in the marginalization of non-Western forms of knowledge. In order to address this, management researchers need to develop decolonizing methodologies (Smith, 1999) that encourage reflexive investigation of the common-sense assumptions, ideologies and conceptions that lie behind the use of certain methods. Following Appadurai (2000), we suggest ethical regimes modelled on universalistic assumptions about the nature of the human subject are highly problematic. Instead there is a need for 'deparochialization' of research ethics. This would create spaces:

[t]o imagine and invite a conversation about research in which ... the very elements of this ethic could be subjects of debate. Scholars from other societies and traditions of inquiry could bring to this debate their own ideas about what counts as new knowledge and what communities of judgement and accountability they might judge to be central in the pursuit of such knowledge. This latter option – which might be called strong internationalization – might be more laborious, even contentious ... but [is a] ... surer way to create communities and conventions of research in which membership does not require unquestioned prior adherence to a quite specific research ethic. (Appadurai, 2000, p. 14)

Within such spaces, indigenous communities would be empowered, not only to suggest how to conduct 'ethical research' that

respects local norms and knowledge, but also to become *active* participants, as research becomes a 'right' to be claimed and exercised (Appadurai, 2006, p. 168). Conversations about research and its ethics could then 'seek to affirm diversity in ethical thought' (Tikly & Bond, 2013, p. 436) and contribute to 'emerging critical literature on research ethics in cross-cultural, postcolonial settings in ways that would provoke re-consideration of actual practice' (Tikly & Bond, 2013, p. 438).

Decolonizing approaches to management research ethics are founded on the assumption that research is done *with* human beings, rather than *on* them. This includes exploration of paradigms, including feminist and indigenous research, that build on an ethics of care and promote values of reciprocity, integrity and personal conduct (Czymoniewicz-Klippel et al., 2010). It also requires greater recognition of the importance of understanding local cultural context and building trust with research participants prior to negotiating informed consent (Czymoniewicz-Klippel et al., 2010). There is also much to be learned from indigenous scholars who have been influential in developing participatory modes of knowing through approaches to study that privilege indigenous knowledge and voices (Battiste, 2008; Smith, 1999). Drawing on their work, Denzin and Giardina (2007) suggest that participant involvement in research involves more than gaining agreement to participate. Instead, participation needs to be based on trust, negotiation and respect as an ongoing process of enactment through 'gift giving'. This justice- and care-based approach to research ethics rejects an ideology of empowerment and provides an alternative to utilitarian avoidance of deception by suggesting that morality is enacted in everyday life, rather than through the exercise of external bureaucratic agency (Denzin & Giardina, 2007). Exploring these ideas could help management researchers in peripheral locations to explore alternative

approaches to research ethics that are more sensitive to the moralities of everyday life, and for management researchers worldwide to be more open to scientific epistemologies grounded in these experiences. This could enable voices of management researchers from the global south to be heard more clearly through their reflexive accounts of conducting research in these locations and development of more 'contextually appropriate methodology and ethical practices' (Shamim & Qureshi, 2010, p. 2).

CONCLUSION

Management research takes place in complex social worlds and involves engagement with broad questions of social justice. Decisions about who, what and how to study are therefore fundamentally political as well as ethical. Questions of research ethics are also culturally and historically specific. Ethics regimes in Anglo-American universities are currently under strain through the bureaucratic burden created in recent decades. They are often seen by researchers and those who manage them, deterministically, as a requirement that cannot be questioned. In the US, where these ethical regimes originated, there is a growing recognition of the costly, complex and conservative nature of these regimes, and recently there have been moves towards reforming IRBs.⁷

This chapter has argued that the international spread of ethical principles and ethical regimes in management research is shaped by core-periphery relations which have implications for the kind of research that is conducted in contexts such as India. Universalist approaches to research ethics are based on colonial assumptions that implicitly privilege Western forms of knowledge and approaches to research (Czymoniewicz-Klippel et al., 2010). This includes the principle of informed consent and the formal, bureaucratic methods used to ensure it, which assume a static,

monolithic view of the human subject as an autonomous individual.

While social scientists from all disciplines are affected by ethics creep, for management researchers this presents particular challenges. There are increasing pressures on management researchers in peripheral locations such as India to adopt 'international' research practices (Khatri et al., 2012). Universalized ethical principles and ethical regimes form part of a broader globalizing trend in management research whereby particular understandings of rigorous research, and the methods on which they rely, have been transformed into global standards (Bell et al., 2017). These are suggested to be applicable in all parts of the world, irrespective of cultural context. The potential for ethics creep from the core to the periphery arose in this project as a consequence of a collaboration between an Indian-based management scholar and one based in the UK – where ethical regimes have become normalized. Ethics creep can also arise when students in countries where regimes of ethical regulation for social science research are not applied move to the US, Canada, the UK or Australia to do their doctoral research. In such cases, they may draw on their culture of origin as a conceptual and empirical resource. However, it is highly likely that in order to do so, they will be required to comply with ethical regimes that are based on Western ethical principles.

We suggest there is a need for a more nuanced, contextualized approach to ethics in management research. Rather than incorporating management researchers from peripheral locations into ethical regimes based on Western ethical principles and modelled on universalistic assumptions about the nature of the human subject, there is a need for more open discussion about the limitations of ethical regimes and the principles on which they are based. This relies on appreciation of cultural traditions that promote alternative conceptions of ethics to those that dominate in the global north.

Notes

- 1 'The Globalization of Management Research Methods', funded by British Academy of Management 2013 Researcher Development Grant, BAMRDGS2013_14833.
- 2 Academy of Management (AoM) *Code of Ethical Conduct* (2005) www.aomonline.org/governanceandethics/aomrevisedcodeofethics.pdf (accessed 30.09.15).
- 3 British Sociological Association (BSA), *Statement of Ethical Practice* (2002) www.britsoc.co.uk/media/27107/StatementofEthicalPractice.pdf (accessed 30.09.15).
- 4 ESRC *Framework for Research Ethics* (2015) www.esrc.ac.uk/files/funding/guidance-for-applicants/esrc-framework-for-research-ethics-2015/ (accessed 30.09.15)
- 5 UK Data Archive www.data-archive.ac.uk/create-manage/consent-ethics/consent?index=3 (accessed 28.06.16). Also includes examples of consent forms.
- 6 Ethical guidelines for Social Science Research in Health (2000) published by the Indian National Committee for Ethics in Social Science Research in Health.
- 7 Robert Dingwall, 'Deregulating social science research ethics', Social Science Space, November 2015 www.socialsciencespace.com/2015/11/deregulating-social-science-research-ethics-clipping-the-wings-of-irbs/ (accessed 28.06.16).

REFERENCES

- Alatas, S.F. (2003) 'Academic dependency and the global division of labour in the social sciences', *Current Sociology*, 51: 599–633.
- Alcadipani, R. and Caldas, M.P. (2012) 'Americanizing Brazilian management', *Critical Perspectives on International Business*, 8: 37–55.
- Allred, P. and Gillies, V. (2012) 'Eliciting research accounts: Re/producing modern subjects?' in Miller, T., Birch, M., Mauthner, M. and Jessop, J. (eds) *Ethics in Qualitative Research*. 2nd edition. London: Sage., pp. 140–156
- Aluwihare-Samaranayake, D. (2012) 'Ethics in qualitative research: A view of the participants' and researchers' world from a critical standpoint', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 11(2): 65–81.
- Alvesson, M. and Willmott, H. (1992) *Critical Management Studies*. London: Sage.
- Appadurai, A. (2000) 'Grassroots globalization and the research imagination', *Public Culture*, 12(1): 1–19.
- Appadurai, A. (2006) 'The right to research', *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 4(2): 167–77.

- Asif, S. (2010) 'Obligations, roles and rights: Research ethics revisited', in Shamim, F. and Qureshi, R. (eds) *Perils, Pitfalls and Reflexivity in Qualitative Research in Education*. Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press, pp. 59–77.
- Battiste, M. (2008) 'Research ethics for protecting indigenous knowledge and heritage: Institutional and individual responsibilities'. In N. K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln and L. Tuhiwai Smith (Eds.) *Handbook of Critical Indigenous Methodologies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 497–511.
- Bauman, Z. (1989/1991) *Modernity and the Holocaust*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Bell, E. and Bryman, A. (2007) 'The ethics of management research: An exploratory content analysis', *British Journal of Management*, 18(1): 63–77.
- Bell, E. and Willmott, H. (2014) 'Editor's introduction: Qualitative research – Themes and prospects', in Bell, E. and Willmott, H. (eds) *Major Works in Qualitative Research in Business and Management*. London: Sage, pp. xxi–liv.
- Bell, E. and Wray Bliss, E. (2009) 'Research ethics: Regulations and responsibilities', in Bryman, A. and Buchanan, D. (eds) *SAGE Handbook of Organizational Research Methods*. London: Sage, pp. 78–92.
- Bell, E., Kothiyal, N. and Willmott, H. (2017) 'Methodology-as-technique and the meaning of rigor in globalized management research', *British Journal of Management*, 28(3): 534–550.
- Bhattacharya, K. (2007) 'Consenting to the consent form: What are the fixed and fluid understandings between the researcher and the researched', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13(8): 1095–1115.
- Cohn, B.S. (1996) *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Coomber, R. (2002) 'Signing your life away', *Sociological Research Online*, 7(1). www.socresonline.org.uk/7/1/coomber.html.
- Czyminiewicz-Klippel, M.T., Brijnath, B. and Crockett, B. (2010) 'Ethics and the promotion of inclusiveness in qualitative research: Case examples from Asia and the Pacific', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(5): 332–41.
- Den Hoonaard, W.C. (2011) *The Seduction of Ethics: Transforming the Social Sciences*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Denzin, N.K. and Giardina, M.D. (2007) 'Introduction: Ethical futures in qualitative research', in Denzin, N.K. and Giardina, M.D. (eds) *Ethical Futures in Qualitative Research: Decolonizing the Politics of Knowledge*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, pp. 9–43.
- Dimaggio, P.J. and Powell, W.W. (1983) 'The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields', *American Sociological Review*, 48(2): 147–60.
- Dingwall, R. (2006) 'Confronting the anti-democrats: The unethical nature of ethical regulation in social science', *Medical Sociology Online*, 1: 51–8.
- Dingwall, R. (2008) 'The case against ethical regulation in humanities and social science research', *21 Century Society*, 3(1): 1–12.
- ESRC Framework for Research Ethics (2015) www.esrc.ac.uk/files/funding/guidance-for-applicants/esrc-framework-for-research-ethics-2015/ (accessed 30.09.15).
- Ghosh, K. (2006) 'Between global flows and local dams: Indigeness, locality, and the transnational sphere in Jharkhand, India', *Cultural Anthropology*, 21(4): 501–34.
- Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972–1977*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Gobo, G. (2011) 'Glocalizing methodology? The encounter between local methodologies', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 14(6): 417–37.
- Gupta, A. (2012). *Red tape: Bureaucracy, structural violence, and poverty in India*. Durham, NC.: Duke University Press.
- Guta, A., Nixon, S.A. and Wilson, M.G. (2013) 'Resisting the seduction of ethics "creep": Using Foucault to surface complexity and contradiction in research ethics review', *Social Science & Medicine*, 98: 301–10.
- Haggerty, K.D. (2004) 'Ethics creep: Governing social science research in the name of ethics', *Qualitative Sociology*, 27: 391–414.
- Hammersley, M. (2009) 'Against the ethicists: On the evils of ethical regulation', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12(3): 211–25.
- Hammersley, M. and Traianou, A. (2014) 'Foucault and research ethics', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20(3): 227–38.
- Hedgecoe, A. (2015) 'Reputational risk, academic freedom and research ethics review', *Sociology*, 50(3): 1–16.
- Hoeyer, K. (2009) 'Informed consent: The making of a ubiquitous rule in medical practice', *Organization*, 16(2): 267–88.
- Ibarra Colado, E. (2006) 'Organization studies and epistemic coloniality in Latin America: Thinking Otherness from the margins', *Organization*, 13(4): 463–88.
- Jackson, T. (2014) 'How can we encourage indigenous research?' *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 14(2): 135–7.

- Khatri, N., Ojha, A.K., Budhwar, P., Srinivasan, V. & Varma, A. (2012) 'Management research in India: Current state and future directions', *IIMB Management Review*, 24: 104–115.
- Kothiyal, N., Bell, E. and Clarke, C. (forthcoming) 'Moving Beyond Mimicry: Creating Hybrid Spaces in Indian Business Schools', *Academy of Management Learning & Education*.
- Kumar, A. (2006) 'Culture, development and the cultural capital of farce', *Economics and Political Weekly*, 41(40): 4281–91.
- Milgram, S. (1963). 'A Behavioral Study of Obedience', *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 67: 371–8.
- Miller, T. and Boulton, M. (2007) 'Changing constructions of informed consent: Qualitative research and complex social worlds', *Social Science and Medicine*, 2199–211.
- Mingers, J. and Willmott, H. (2013) 'Taylorizing business school research: On the "one best way" performative effects of journal ranking lists', *Human Relations*, 66: 1051–73.
- Nkomo, S.M. (2015) 'Challenges for management and business education in a "developmental state": The case of South Africa', *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 14(2): 242–58.
- Power, M. (1994) *The Audit Society: Rituals of Verification*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Prasad, A. (2012) *Against the Grain: Advances in Postcolonial Organization Studies*. Copenhagen, Denmark: Copenhagen Business School Press DK.
- Qureshi, R. (2010) 'Ethical standards and ethical environment: Tensions and a way forward', in Shamim, F. and Qureshi, R. (eds) *Perils, Pitfalls and Reflexivity in Qualitative Research in Education*. Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press, pp. 127–147.
- Rarieya, J.F.A. (2010) 'The complexity of researching the lives of women school teachers in Kenya', in Shamim, F. and Qureshi, R. (eds) *Perils, Pitfalls and Reflexivity in Qualitative Research in Education*. Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press, pp. 78–100.
- Richardson, S. and McMullan, M. (2007) 'Research ethics in the UK: What can sociology learn from health?' *Sociology*, 41(6): 1115–32.
- Riessman, C.K. (2005) 'Exporting ethics: A narrative about narrative research in South India', *Health*, 9(4): 473–90.
- Rosenberg, M. (1965) *Society and the Adolescent Self Image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Sato, Y. (2013) 'Exploitation versus "going back"', in Paoletti, I., Tomás, M.I. and Menéndez, F. (eds) *Practices of Ethics: An Empirical Approach to Ethics in Social Sciences Research*. Newcastle-on-Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 177–96.
- Shamim, F. and Qureshi, R. (2010) *Perils, Pitfalls and Reflexivity in Qualitative Research in Education*. Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press.
- Shamim, F. and Qureshi, R. (2013) 'Informed consent in educational research in the South: Tensions and accommodations', *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 43(4): 464–82.
- Sin, C.H. (2005) 'Seeking informed consent: Reflections on research practice', *Sociology*, 39(2): 277–94.
- Singh, S.S. (2013) 'Intervention, identity and marginality: An ethnographic account of the mushers', *Economics and Political Weekly*, 48(20): 52–9.
- Smith, L.T. (1999) *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books.
- Spivak, G.C. (1999) *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Thorne, B. (1980) '"You still takin' notes?": Fieldwork and problems of informed consent', *Social Problems*, 27(3): 284–97.
- Tikly, L. and Bond, T. (2013) 'Towards a postcolonial research ethics in comparative and international education', *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 43(4): 422–42.
- Westwood, R., Jack, G., Khan, F.R. and Frenkel, M. (2014) *Core-Periphery Relations and Organization Studies*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Digital Ethics

Rebecca Whiting and Katrina Pritchard

INTRODUCTION

In the context of qualitative research, ethics are generally defined as the moral principles or rules of behaviour that guide research from inception through to publication and the curation of data. The main concern is to minimize risk of actual or potential harm whilst ensuring the maximum benefit of the research (ESRC, 2015a). Our focus here is ‘digital ethics’, referring to ethical considerations in research that uses and/or studies web-based activities and settings. It should be noted that this is variously referred to as ‘e-research’, ‘internet-mediated’, ‘web’, ‘digital’ or ‘online’ research. For simplicity, we use the term internet research as an umbrella categorization. Our primary interest is in the application of digital ethics to qualitative research in the field of business and management, though we draw from useful sources across a range of disciplines.

The aim of the chapter is to provide an overview of the key ethical issues in internet

research: assessing what is human participation; when informed consent is required and from whom; the dilemma of what is public or private on the internet; and decisions about anonymization or attribution. We situate these issues within a discussion of overarching tensions. These encompass flux and uncertainty surrounding both internet technology and the guidance developed to address it; the type and status of such guidelines; a lack of transparency in how digital ethics are actually addressed in practice; and the particular challenges of what is seen as ‘problematic’ qualitative research.

Our starting point is to scope the ethics context for researchers in the field of business and management. We then examine the literature that has considered the ethics of internet research. This is used to highlight various overarching tensions before examining the key issues in greater detail. In doing so, we consider a selection of different approaches that a qualitative researcher might like to consider when reviewing

ethical guidance and practice to address these dilemmas in their own research. It is not our intention to summarize or indeed review all possible different ethics guidelines that might conceivably apply. Examples are included of available material, ranging from the formal (published ethics guidance) to the more informal (published research that may nevertheless become accepted practice). We conclude with suggestions as to how qualitative researchers might address the practicalities of dealing with ethical dilemmas when carrying out internet research in the field of business and management.

SCOPING ETHICS IN BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT

For business and management researchers, there is unlikely to be a single specific body or ethics code that applies; we must always draw on guidance from a developing range that may extend beyond this field to include our own institutions, professional and funding bodies, and specialist digital ethics guidance. For example, a number of bodies support and represent the academic community and its engagement with professional activities in the field of business and management. These generally serve particular geographical constituencies, though the events they organize and their members' work may be international. Member activities may include research, teaching, learning and practice. Researchers can check whether the relevant body for their location publishes a code of ethics or not. For example, the Academy of Management (AoM, United States) and the British Academy of Management (BAM, in combination with the Chartered Association of Business Schools and the Higher Education Academy) both issue such guidance. Their codes are widely drawn to address the full range of academic activities (not just research), though neither specifically addresses digital ethics. In the

case of BAM, the guidance is a starting point to encourage members to take responsibility for their own ethical practice; this is supplemented by links to additional resources such as the ethical codes of other bodies in the fields of social anthropology, sociology and psychology (including the British Psychological Society) and funders (including the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)).

On the other hand, as at April 2016, neither the European Academy of Management nor the Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management issue such guidance. Bodies focusing on the delivery of teaching in management and business schools, for example, the European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management, the European Foundation for Management Development and the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, also do not publish research ethic guidelines, though they may offer codes of practice on the need to include ethics in programme curricula and doctoral training. As at April 2016, none of these refers to internet research.

It should be noted, however, that new codes are emerging as organizations update their guidelines to reflect the increasing significance of internet research. This covers a 'wide range of activities' (British Psychological Society, 2013, p. 1) across both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Digital research tools and techniques are nascent, developing alongside the internet as it becomes more socially interactive and where content is constantly changing. Not only are traditional research methods reimagined, new forms of data are made available to study (for example, tweets, namely 140 character microblogs, YouTube videos, below-the-line reader comments on news stories), new collaborations are formed and new tools are made available (including proprietary ones by social media platforms such as Twitter). Procter et al. (2013) provide an example of an agreement between Twitter and *The Guardian* newspaper which involved

the former providing a Twitter corpus to the latter and its academic collaborators. The Twitter search application program interface (API), however, only provides 1 per cent of actual traffic (Burnap et al., 2015). Procter et al. (2015) discuss the development of tools specifically to address the limitations of the availability and analysis of social media data by researchers.

This changing landscape has implications for ethics in business and management. One aspect relates to the scope of institutional ethics committees. Traditionally, committees have often sought to determine whether data to be collected are considered primary or secondary; the former are generally seen as requiring greater ethical scrutiny. But we need to consider if this classification is still meaningful when digital technology allows for a 'redistribution of methods between researchers, devices, information and users, in online environments' (Marres, 2012, p. 161) and researchers explore new ways of accessing textual and visual data. See Pritchard and Whiting (2018), for a brief discussion of the ethical and practical considerations of using stock photos, one genre of visual data in internet research.

Primary data is usually defined as that obtained directly and actively by the researcher from participants. The interaction between participant and researcher is critical rather than its mode. In internet research, this could be via an online interview. In primary data analysis, the same researcher analyses this data. With secondary data, there is no direct interaction between researcher and research subject. Existing information is created or becomes available to the researcher. In internet research, data could be press reports of employee use of blogs and social media (Richards, 2012). In secondary data analysis, the researcher who analyses the data is not the one who created it. However, whilst such data is not generated by direct research interaction with participants, the researcher still needs to be active in collecting (or, we might say, constructing) it. Richards (2012)

describes this process, specifically monitoring and recording press reports via his own blog. So in the context of internet research, typologies of primary and secondary data begin to blur. We suggest that it is more useful to look beyond the primary/secondary dualism (Bishop, 2007) and to consider the more explicit question of whether or not the research involves human participants (discussed in detail below).

The scope of regulated internet activities also extends beyond research. Ethical considerations were first mentioned in academic publications in the 1990s (Sharf, 1999), and more formal guidelines for researchers appeared soon after, for example, from the Association of Internet Researchers (Ess, 2002). Potentially problematic research behaviours were identified, such as 'lurking' (reading online posts without contributing) and 'harvesting' (collecting and using the words of others, even in an ostensibly public domain and with consent, but without contributing to the purpose of the chat room or forum). Lurking was, however, seen as a methodological advantage by others (Mann & Stewart, 2000). At the same time, the responsibilities of other organizations such as news media and internet service providers also came under scrutiny (Broadcasting Standards Commission, 1999). Legislation now covers issues such as data protection, freedom of information, the 'right to be forgotten', freedom of speech and whistle-blowing. Indeed, for what was originally conceived as an open and unregulated space, the internet has become the focus of a great deal of policy, law and governance (Palfrey, 2010). So whilst our focus is on ethical rather than other types of regulatory codes, these can never be entirely separate and as researchers we need to take all these into account. This may pose particular challenges for multi-national research teams in business and management. For example, in the area of data protection, the European Union recognizes an Internet Protocol Address (the numerical label assigned to a computer or other device which

is connected to a network that uses the internet for communication) as personally identifiable data, but the US does not (Buchanan & Hvizdak, 2009). As we discuss below, this is significant in decisions by researchers about what ‘personal’ information about their participants to redact in research publications or data sharing.

OVERARCHING TENSIONS

Four overarching tensions provide a backdrop to a consideration of digital ethics. These concern the state of flux and uncertainty surrounding ethical codes in this field, the type and status of such guidance, the particular challenges presented by qualitative research, and the lack of transparency that flows from an absence of explicit examination of ethical issues in much published internet research. With an increase in such research, we found the emergence of specialist fields focusing on a particular feature such as Twitter use (Zimmer & Proferes, 2014), but also an emergent field specifically examining digital ethics. The topic has been the subject of several books (Ess, 2009; McKee & Porter, 2009; Whiteman, 2012), book chapters (Anderson & Jirotko, 2015; Buchanan, 2010; Buchanan & Zimmer, 2015; Eynon et al., 2008) and a special issue in the journal *Qualitative Research in Psychology* (Morison et al., 2015). We now explore the overarching tensions noted above and consider how they provide a backdrop to an examination of digital ethics.

Flux and Uncertainty

Rapidly changing technology leaves researchers and institutional ethics committees wrestling with specific situations not directly anticipated by such codes. Guidelines relating specifically to digital ethics are themselves also subject to flux in response to new technologies or new regulations. For

example, the UK’s ESRC has published two sets of ethics guidelines within five years (in 2010 and 2015) and the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) has published two within ten years (2002 and 2012). What is regarded as ethical also evolves over time (Schultze & Mason, 2012). Consequently, the field of digital ethics feels unfixed in comparison to non-digital ethics, for example, where ethical practice for ‘standard’ interviews is quite well known. Most research bodies address digital ethics to some degree, but how they do so is less clear and more varied. Quite contrasting stances may be adopted by different institutional ethics committees to similar issues and may differ from published guidance from particular governing bodies. We note from our own experience that it can be difficult to get institutional ethics committees to engage with the issue of whether human participation is involved in internet research. What is clear, however, is that new technologies such as wearable cameras (Mok et al., 2015), 3D printing, digital video and photography, use of avatars, and new forms and sources of online data such as leaked material from organizations (Michael, 2015) will continue to present new challenges. This brings us to what we can expect with regard to the type and status of ethical guidance available.

Type and Status of Guidance

The state of technological flux raises issues about the type of ethical guidance that is required or desirable. Where specific guidance is issued that directly addresses digital ethics, this can give rise to tensions as to its status vis-à-vis previous, more general ethics guidance. Some institutions now specify which takes precedence. For example, the British Psychological Society (BPS) specifies that its Ethics Guidelines for Internet-Mediated Research (British Psychological Society, 2013) is supplemental and subordinate to the Society’s Code of Human

Research Ethics (British Psychological Society, 2014) and to its overarching Code of Ethics and Conduct (British Psychological Society, 2009). Further, generic ethical guidelines tend to assume that researchers can anticipate forms of data and modes of participant engagement, describing in advance how to ensure participants' rights are secured. This is increasingly difficult to achieve in an era of open access and data sharing (possible future use of data by other researchers) and given we cannot predict how participants themselves might in future engage with the internet (Saunders et al., 2015). Likewise, institutions cannot be expected to anticipate all future settings for the ethical guidance they issue. In a similar vein, the ESRC identifies internet research as an area where ethics committees might need to consult independent experts for their guidance on research proposals (2015a).

Significantly, recent guidelines from the AoIR (Markham & Buchanan, 2012), the BPS (British Psychological Society, 2013) and the ESRC (2015a) all recommend a contextualized, continual approach to ethical appraisal for internet research. This involves a highly reflexive approach from the researcher, who is required to consider ethics not just at the outset of the project but throughout the research lifecycle. It also involves being sensitive to the specific internet context. We consider this continual, contextualized approach in more detail below. Likewise, authors in this area reject the idea of a straightforward formula for conducting ethical internet research, but rather emphasize the researcher's responsibility to consider guidance within the context of their own research and ethical practice (Whiteman, 2012). The extent to which such consideration is readily available as a resource for other researchers is the issue we explore next.

Lack of Transparency

Although we identified a literature in this area, there is a general absence of consideration of

ethics issues in published work across a range of academic disciplines. For example, in the field of information systems (IS), Schutze and Mason note 'currently insufficient discussion ... about the ethics of Internet research' (2012, p. 302), criticizing how much published internet research does not explicitly engage with ethical issues. In their useful summary of academic research using Twitter data, Zimmer and Proferes (2014) report that only 16 of the 380 studies they analysed mention ethical issues relating to research design and data collection (and when they did, they adopted a variety of conflicting positions). These authors attribute this to early dominance of social media research by computer science and related disciplines which have historically been outside the scope of ethical review boards because their methods were not traditionally seen as involving human participants (Carpenter & Dittrich, 2011). This is not to say that subsequent researchers have failed to address ethical issues, but rather that this is not reported in their publications. This absence and resulting lack of transparency of course simply exacerbates the other tensions we have outlined, and may present particular issues in qualitative research, as we consider next.

'Problematic' Qualitative Research

We noted an early view that qualitative internet research poses particular challenges, from concerns over quality issues to wider ethical considerations. For example, its 'highly personal' probing (DeLorme et al., 2001, p. 271) is seen as requiring greater reliance on researcher integrity than quantitative research such as surveys. This is not the first context in which qualitative research is seen as more inherently risky and problematic than quantitative studies (Cassell & Symon, 2011). Qualitative methods, such as those involving close textual analysis, are seen to raise particular ethical challenges, as we discuss in our section on anonymity or attribution, below. For example, a potential solution

to inadvertent disclosure of the source of data by direct quoting is through ‘cloaking’. This involves changing quotations by paraphrasing the material to prevent readers from identifying the original site by placing text in a search engine. But this is inappropriate where the chosen methodology is conversation or discourse analysis because of the need to use text in its original form (British Psychological Society, 2007), as we discuss further below. The situation is further complicated by research practice and protocols developed within primarily quantitative studies (for example, COSMOS, 2015) that may affect what is accepted as ethical practice in internet research, but which may be impractical or inappropriate for some qualitative research.

These four overarching tensions set the background for our consideration of the key debates in the area of digital ethics.

KEY DEBATES IN DIGITAL ETHICS

We now turn to examine in more detail key debates taking place within digital ethics today. Throughout this chapter, we touch on the ethical guidelines of three institutions (AoIR, BPS and ESRC) selected from a range of bodies that business and management researchers might need to negotiate in the course of their research. When starting our own internet research in 2011, we reviewed guidelines from a range of bodies and decided that the AoIR guidance was the most advanced in terms of digital ethics. This made it relevant to our project, which we carried out in the UK and started in a department of organizational psychology. Whilst we do not suggest that the selected three are necessarily representative of similar bodies in other countries, they usefully illustrate a contrasting range of approaches to the issue of digital ethics, including how internet research is defined. As discussed above, all researchers will have to negotiate similar

combinations of ethical guidance that might apply to the particular circumstances of themselves and their research. In addition to formal ethics guidelines, specific research projects may publish statements of their ethical practice. We have therefore additionally considered one such statement relating to social media research (COSMOS, 2015). This statement is partly driven by the need to abide by the terms of use of their data providers, terms geared more towards developers than researchers (specifically, Twitter’s Developer Policy and Developer Agreement), as required by the ESRC (2015a). Project ethics statements are a practical way for researchers to provide details of their own ethical engagement, which may be adopted by others as good practice or critiqued through publication and citation. We consider aspects of these various guidelines and statements as we now turn to address the key debates in more detail.

What is Public or Private on the Internet?

This question goes to the heart of a range of ethical issues facing internet researchers today and largely determines whether material can be used as data in research, particularly without explicit consent. The starting point is that although the internet is widely regarded as a public space, there are parts which users may conceive as private. The challenge for internet researchers is that much engagement with the internet takes place simultaneously in places regarded as private, such as the home, and in public, such as an open discussion forum (British Psychological Society, 2013). As Barnes explains, ‘sitting at home alone typing into a computer may feel like a private exchange. However, once private information is posted on the internet, it becomes available for others to read. We have no control over who can read our seemingly private words’ (Barnes, 2006). She suggests this confusion may be partly a function of the

design and sign-up processes of particular websites that may imply a degree of privacy to otherwise fully public sites. Usage of such sites is often bound by notoriously complex terms and conditions regarding the status of material posted (Hull, 2015). Determining what is public or private therefore forms a critical part of the context for considering digital ethics. It is recognized that these are contested terms and that the distinction between private and public is more of a spectrum than a binary divide. For example, Sveningsson Elm (2009) argues that online spaces should be considered along a continuum of public to private, reflecting the grey area between the two.

Much focus is therefore on determining how to classify the internet context along this spectrum for the purpose of assessing ethical choices for the researcher. Some argue that posting almost any material on the internet can be considered public behaviour and therefore subject to the same ethical guidelines as other behaviours in a public space (Gosling & Mason, 2015). This accords with an established tradition that observing behaviour in public spaces (pre-internet, these would have been physical locations) does not require advance notice that research is being carried out or consent from those present (Roberts, 2015). Others reject this, invoking consideration of social norms and practices in determining whether such observation and use are acceptable; they argue that internet users may have reasonable expectations of privacy and of their behaviour not being made the subject of research (Gosling & Mason, 2015). An alternative view regards online postings as not involving human participants (Rodríguez, 2013), an angle we explore in the next section of this chapter.

So how might a researcher determine whether a particular internet location is a private or public space, and if the material there can be used as data in research? In contrast to other aspects of ethical considerations, this is one area where researchers have begun to detail their decision-making about

the private/public status of their research data (Roberts, 2015). Although a comprehensive review of the literature on this topic is beyond the scope of this chapter, we have identified a number of different approaches which we briefly examine.

One view is where researcher understanding of what is public is driven by what technology makes it possible to access (Schultze & Mason, 2012). This might involve assessing whether the site in question requires registration (Schotanus-Dijkstra et al., 2014). But on its own this would represent quite a narrow approach, one which focuses more on the space and less on behaviour. It risks ignoring norms and practices which apply to the internet as much as other social spaces. The majority of studies now additionally include more nuanced tests that seek to contextualize the internet setting, such as the relative vulnerability of the population being studied (Holtz et al., 2012), the degree to which the material has already been publicly viewed (Marcus et al., 2012), the sensitivity of the topic (Trevisan & Reilly, 2014) and the intended audience (Fleischmann & Miller, 2013).

Another aspect of this contextualization is exploring whether users of a particular internet location perceive it to be a public or private space, and crucially whether they might expect a researcher to access user-generated material and use it for research. Here, research on the privacy and usage expectations of different groups of internet users is helpful. Without it, 'we risk constructing an understanding of Internet research ethics that is not supported by reality' (Dawson, 2014, p. 430). A survey specifically looking at user views reported a mix of opinions, with some considering that no online space is truly private (Beninger et al., 2014). Research on user privacy understanding and expectation (Paechter, 2013; Roberts, 2015; Schultze & Mason, 2012) suggests some users may adapt behaviours to fit with their perceptions of what is private or public in different internet settings. Schultze and Mason (2012),

however, conclude that users of internet chatrooms and online forums regard their communications as private (even on a website that its creators intended as being in the public domain). Most users in these cases considered that research without informed consent was unacceptable (see, for example, Chen et al., 2004; Hudson & Bruckman, 2004). The challenge for qualitative researchers in business and management is that most empirical examples are drawn from health sciences, where ethical concerns, for example in relation to perceived vulnerability to harm through research, may be higher. This is consistent with ethical guidance which imposes a greater obligation on the researcher to protect as the vulnerability of participants increases (Markham & Buchanan, 2012).

Schultze and Mason (2012) helpfully list characteristics for use in assessing expectations of internet privacy: these are group size, communicative purpose, social status of the community, intended audience for contribution, community membership policy, norms and expectations, and content storage and accessibility. These bring together many issues debated here and may provide a workable framework to guide researchers in this area. Recognizing the constructed nature of a concept like privacy is also useful. Hull's (2015) examination of privacy self-management online positions privacy as an individual commodity that internet users are willing to trade for other market goods. This usefully reminds us that privacy in online settings may be given up ('traded', in Hull's terms) for the convenience of accessing a website that allows sharing information with family and friends, but not necessarily for the convenience of researchers seeking online data.

The private vs. public dilemma is also specifically addressed in some ethical guidelines. The ESRC suggests that a full ethics review is potentially required for internet research 'when the understanding of privacy in these settings is contentious where sensitive issues are discussed' (2015a, p. 10). This highlights the difficulty for institutions

surrounding the public/private distinction. Some provide a guiding framework (such as the BPS's advice to consider the 'potentially damaging effects for participants' of using the material) rather than attempt precise categorizations (British Psychological Society, 2013; Markham & Buchanan, 2012). This is not straightforward either, as Markham and Buchanan neatly summarize: 'the uniqueness and almost endless range of specific situations defy attempts to universalize experience or define in advance what might constitute harmful research practice' (Markham & Buchanan, 2012, p. 7). Reviewing internet-mediated research, the BPS (2013) suggests researchers consider variable interpretations of public and private, advising significant time be invested in detailed consideration of the particular empirical circumstances. Thus it is incumbent on researchers to consider to what extent someone sharing information via the internet may expect to be subject to academic investigation and publication. This involves considering when, how and where the material was posted and its subsequent use and reuse across the web. So, for example, an individual who actively encourages distribution of their material might be regarded differently from someone attempting to restrict access even if both are publicly visible. Further consideration would need to be given in cases where an individual has subsequently retracted information.

Are We Dealing with Human Participants?

A research decision to identify and label participants, respondents or research subjects is significant not least since it implies particular ethical commitments and power relationships (Amis & Silk, 2008). It also identifies those who are not participants, thus setting up a number of other categories including 'researcher'. Online data produced by individuals (for example, material on websites, postings to online communities) forms the

basis for what has been described as ‘passive’ online qualitative research (Morison et al., 2015). The key debate is whether the use of such data should be conceptualized as human subject research (requiring ethical consideration) or, as we debate in our Introduction, merely as secondary analysis (Bradley & Carter, 2012).

More generally, the internet, particularly the interactive web, is seen to have increased the entanglement between users and the technologies they employ (Van Doorn, 2011). People’s identities become hybrid, ‘simultaneously performed in physical and digital spaces ... as Web 2.0 applications inherently entangle them with the digital material that results from their online activities’ (Schultze & Mason, 2012, p. 302). These authors problematize whether we can distinguish between the results of what people do in these digital spaces (send emails, upload photos, create profiles, comment on online media stories, write blogs) and their physical human identity. It is suggested that the two are inextricably intertwined (boyd, 2006) and their virtual presences online are ‘psychological extensions and projections of each user’s identity’ (Schultze & Mason, 2012, p. 302).

Schultze and Mason (2012) suggest an interesting parallel with archaeology. Initially, this discipline engaged with the material remains of human cultures (including long-deceased human bodies and their related artefacts). Over time, however, it developed from a field that prioritized the development of a taxonomy of found objects to one that encompassed the ‘rights, interests, sensitivities, cultures and attributes of the past inhabitants of research sites and, especially, with the rights and concerns of these ancient parties’ contemporary surrogates’ (2012, p. 309). These authors set out a framework to assess whether you are dealing with a human participant in an internet study. This involves rating from low to high on three dimensions (degree of entanglement, interaction/intervention and expectation of privacy). Their framework has been

described as ‘purposefully conservative’ and likely to result in more research being classified as involving human participation than would be the case within disciplines such as IS (Zimmer, 2012, p. 313), which illustrates how ‘human participation’ is a rather contested term. In summary, this debate highlights the extent to which a ‘human participants’ approach is the most suitable model to apply to internet research when deciding issues of digital ethics, with some authors questioning the appropriateness of its application (Bassett & O’Riordan, 2002).

Do We Need to Obtain Informed Consent and, If So, From Whom?

One starting point is whether the research involves collecting data in active or passive ways, the former where researchers engage directly with participants in, or about, online spaces and the latter where there is no direct interaction with participants (Morison et al., 2015). Both approaches require consideration of ethical issues, but that of obtaining informed consent is generally more likely with active methods. With passive research approaches, where there is no direct intervention or interaction between researcher and participant, the research may be judged as not involving ‘human participation’ and fall outside the requirement for formal application to an institutional review board or ethics committee. For example, Langer and Beckman (2005) contend that message board contributions are analogous to readers’ letters to newspapers and do not require notice or consent to be used as data.

But determining whether we need to seek consent in internet research is closely related to considerations of what is private or public, as debated above, and is by no means straightforward. For example, the COSMOS project adopts a ‘Big Data’ approach to the study of social media data across various social and policy contexts. Their ethics statement (COSMOS, 2015) states that in research outputs they do

not directly quote individual Twitter users without their informed consent (paragraph 10). They do, however, directly quote from Twitter accounts maintained by public organizations (such as government departments, law enforcement and local authorities) without seeking prior informed consent (paragraph 11). The statement relates to a particular research project and is not guidance as such, though if cited and adopted it could take on the status of accepted practice. There are a number of points to note. First, the statement rejects the notion that by having a public Twitter stream, an individual has given implied consent to its use in research. Second, the practice relates to what happens in research publications and not during data analysis. Third, the approach involves making a judgement call on the status of the Twitter account in question (Is it maintained by an individual or by a public organization? What is a public organization?). Fourth, where consent is not possible, the project team are able to represent the content of tweets in alternative ways (such as topic clustering, word clouds or themes). In our view, this practice may make it difficult for those qualitative researchers who are unable to rely on alternative ways of presenting Twitter content where close textual analysis is required, as we discuss further below. Significantly, perhaps, COSMOS have thus far published work applying social network analysis and sentiment analysis which rely on meta data and textual analysis approaches which do not require the identification of individual tweets in publications (for example, Burnap et al., 2015).

An additional challenge is from whom we seek consent. How might a researcher acquire informed consent from someone who wants to remain anonymous (Markham, 2005)? This should be possible through contacting the online persona of the individual though, as Paechter (2013) points out, the researcher should check the person they are dealing with is an adult and not a child. This may be less of a consideration in online sites relevant in the field of business and management. What if the internet site involves a number

of different contributors? In the context of a divorce support forum, Paechter (2013) took the view that the site owner was able to give consent to research using the site's postings on behalf of the community, but that consent to interviews should be given separately and individually. This importantly reminds us that internet research is often combined with offline data and methods. This combined information can threaten to increase the risk to a participant's privacy and potential harm, making informed consent more desirable.

Lastly, thinking about consent as an ongoing process becomes particularly complex in terms of foreseeing possible future uses of internet material if transferred to data archives. In the context of Twitter, one particular challenge is when tweets (or whole Twitter accounts) are later deleted by their users: this poses difficult issues for researchers depending on when this occurs (during collection, analysis or after publication). COSMOS define these as 'high risk' data which are precluded from publication under the Twitter Developer Agreement. Data may also include retweets which have been retweeted from a private restricted Twitter account into the public domain, which is also seen as problematic (Meeder et al., 2010). This has prompted debate as to whether it is appropriate to archive Twitter data for future research, given accounts include personally identifiable information including geo-locational data about the user; likewise, whether researchers should respect a user's desire to opt out or have unwanted tweets removed from any archiving function (Zimmer & Proferes, 2014). As before, the focus of debate centres on the privacy expectations of the Twitter users such as the extent to which they were aware of the fully public nature of their tweeting activity.

Should We Anonymize or Attribute?

Deciding whether internet material should be anonymized or attributed in research is

closely linked to views about the status of online material, the stage in the research process, and whether passive online qualitative research involves human participants or is just secondary data analysis (Bradley & Carter, 2012). It also depends on whether those who post material are seen as research participants or authors (Beaulieu & Estalella, 2012). As noted above, some regard online messages as equivalent to readers' letters to a newspaper (Langer & Beckman, 2005) or as literary works (Kozinets, 2010). This would mean it would be inappropriate to anonymize them or change any pseudonyms. Indeed, in this view it would be important to attribute the material to however the authors have self-identified themselves. A researcher might, however, need to consider who has ownership of the words and associated copyright. This might be the author, the online community or the owner of the site on which it is posted (Roberts et al., 2008). So the answers to these questions would determine whether the issue was one of obtaining informed consent or complying with copyright (or both). But as we have already seen, this may be overly simplistic without a fuller consideration of other contextual matters. So once again there are grey areas which add complexity when we consider the handling of publicly accessible material.

We have discussed elsewhere in relation to our own research (Pritchard & Whiting, 2012) the process of ethical review, which resulted in a focus on what we judged to be 'public' areas of the internet (for example, those not requiring membership or registration). Our research involves consideration of a range of web-based textual and visual data which represents a critical communicative context for understanding constructions of age and ageing at work (see Pritchard & Whiting, 2018). Our study involved the systematic collection of Web 2.0 material about age at work using internet tools in a daily automated search process over 150 days during 2011–12. Data included online news with reader comments, reports, images such

as stock photos, blog posts and tweets. A week's data was sampled to assess the range of data types, issues and voices. From this, more detailed research questions were developed, including how generations are enrolled in the construction of age-related employment issues (Pritchard & Whiting, 2014) and how understandings of gendered ageing are constructed and interpreted via stock photos (Pritchard & Whiting, 2015).

We retained whatever names were adopted by the internet user (not attempting any anonymization) in the data collection, management and analysis stages of our research. This seemed critical to our understanding of our data and the role of different voices within it. However, in our publications we have maintained a broad categorization of sites, sources and individuals to ensure anonymity (Pritchard & Whiting, 2014, 2015). This follows recommendations that online identities should be treated with the same care (re anonymity and confidentiality) as 'real' names (British Psychological Society, 2013).

A further specific concern is the traceability of data via search engines, even if anonymized. This is problematic for qualitative researchers who rely heavily on quotes to illustrate their analysis. Both the AoIR (Markham & Buchanan, 2012) and the BPS (British Psychological Society, 2013) suggest 'cloaking' quotes; the practice of subtly altering the original, providing this fits within the research design principles. This has significant implications and may create more problems than it solves. First, search engines often list alternatives for any search, so even an extensive rewording could result in the source being identified. Second, a rephrased quote might inadvertently direct the search to an incorrect source or a source which has also used this text. Third, cloaking will not be appropriate where the chosen methodology is conversation or discourse analysis because of the need to use text in its original form (British Psychological Society, 2007). For these reasons, we do not deploy

cloaking, but this practice is currently receiving a good deal of attention and, along with many of the issues raised so far, will require further debate.

GOING FORWARD: FUTURE DIRECTIONS

We now turn to consider likely future developments within digital ethics, including two key areas of further research. First is the matter of enhancing understanding of the researcher role and issues of researcher protection in internet research. These are comparatively undeveloped but we see them as an essential part of the second area, namely the adoption of a wider reflexive process of digital ethics to address the currently limited transparency in publications.

Researcher Role and Protection

With academics increasingly encouraged to participate in social media to enhance research impact (Brent Zook, 2015), this raises the wider issue of roles where internet researchers also engage with the web in other capacities. In our own research, blogging and tweeting have resulted in our online content appearing in the alerts we set up to collect data for our research; potentially we as researchers then become the ‘researched’. Whiteman (2012) notes how researchers move between the roles of ‘observer’ and ‘participant’ in the online field and the difficulty in maintaining separation between these in qualitative research. This theme is developed by Paechter (2013) in analysis of her hybrid insider/outsider status in respect of her research site (a divorce support website), in which she also participated in a personal capacity. Her account describes the challenge of keeping professional and personal identities separate in this ethnographic research. Such dual roles within an online

community positions the researcher as an insider (a regular member of the forum) and simultaneously as an outsider (a researcher observing and analysing the community). Paechter (2013) and Barratt (2012) usefully discuss how they handled the disclosure required in their online research settings. Paechter used a pseudonym in her personal capacity, her actual first name in her researcher role and her hybrid identity was only made explicit to the site’s management group. This involved an ethical responsibility not to mix these two roles so that ‘people do not become afraid that things said to [her] in [her] pseudonymous role will be incorporated into the research’ (Paechter, 2013, p. 82), part of a wider duty to act with integrity and good faith. Barratt (recruiting participants from various online forums of which she was, sometimes, a ‘lurking’ member) set up a dedicated project website and provided links to this and her university website as part of a legitimacy building process. She reiterates the importance of displaying technical and cultural competence (such as language and humour) to participants as well as a shared history of personal use of online settings (Barratt, 2012).

There are also issues of the safety and protection of the researcher. In one sense, our greatest protection is through enacting ethical behaviour. But within current ethical debates we find little attention given to researcher protection, notwithstanding ethical procedures should protect researchers as well as participants (ESRC, 2015a). Internet research may increase a researcher’s digital footprint, highlighting their identity to those who might seek to influence or engage with the research topic. This will depend on the mode of digital engagement, for example, using an institutional or commercial email address, maintaining a public research blog or deploying other social media. Our initial engagement was tentative, but over time we expanded both our personal and project-specific use of the web (Pritchard & Whiting, 2012). This raised our research

profile, providing opportunities for engagement both online (such as sharing outputs) and offline (such as invited presentations). Further, maintaining a research presence provides a contact for those who may want to find out more or enquire as to whether they feature in our data. Overall, our research presence has not posed any additional risk than would be encountered during our day-to-day use of the internet. Moreover, with increased debate about research impact, such online engagement seems likely to increase. However, dual or hybrid roles for researchers can problematize classifications of active or passive research. The unexpected challenges they present within internet research also underline the need for ongoing reflexivity on the part of the researcher in respect of both ethical considerations but also with regard to methodological adjustments.

Ethical Reflexivity and 'Ethics as Process'

Our second area concerns the call for greater ethical reflexivity (Roberts, 2015) and greater transparency in ethical considerations in published work involving qualitative internet research (Dawson, 2014; Saunders et al., 2015). This might include, for example, presenting 'practical illustrations of the challenges ... encountered in order to open up a discussion about how to manage anonymity issues in the face of the increasing accessibility of online information' (Saunders et al., 2015, p. 135). Likewise, this approach needs to encompass 'forward reflexivity' (Pritchard & Whiting, 2012, p. 350) as researchers need to anticipate issues such as how anonymity may be compromised by a participant's own behaviour (Saunders et al., 2015). Papers that debate ethical issues with which researchers have grappled are very useful, particularly when they provide solutions which meet with local ethical approval (Sharkey et al., 2011). The field of health research is particularly helpful here, providing a useful pointer for

qualitative researchers in business and management. As Dawson (2014) points out, this obligation extends to editors and reviewers to hold authors to account to provide this detail. As ever with qualitative research, though, we fear that word or page limits imposed by journals may militate against a move to accommodate yet further methodological detail.

All of this suggests that digital ethics cannot be addressed as a one-off tick-box exercise. One useful concept here is 'ethics as process', which 'views ethics as relationally dynamic and revisited frequently over the course of a study' (Sharkey et al., 2011, p. 753). This approach prioritizes the relationship between participant and researcher, though this can present a challenge where there is no direct contact between the two (as in our own study). Nevertheless, we consider this to be a promising framework for re-thinking digital ethics. We also recognize this as familiar territory for many qualitative researchers given the strong parallels with both reflexivity and methods of analysis in qualitative research which tend towards the circular and iterative (Morison et al., 2015).

Given how the more considered specialist guidelines and statements (AoIR and BPS) suggest a case-based approach with ongoing reflexive questioning, we suggest that 'ethics as process' would involve considering ethical issues at each stage in the research process: design, data collection/construction, analysis, publication, dissemination and data sharing. Whilst the latter has been less prominent in business and management than say health sciences, it is likely to increase, particularly in publicly funded research. For example, the ESRC expects data sharing and requires data management plans for research council funded work in the UK (ESRC, 2015b). In proposing a processual approach, we suggest these stages are not necessarily wholly discrete. Qualitative research is often an iterative process and there will almost certainly be temporal overlap between stages, particularly where data collection is an ongoing and partially automated procedure, as in

our own research. In other words, decisions made at one stage may need to be revisited later and may affect subsequent iterations of the same process. Neither do we imply that once certain ethical considerations (such as anonymity) are addressed at one stage they are finished with, since they may re-appear as the internet context itself changes. We see this as part of a wider trend towards issues such as informed consent being seen as ongoing ethical obligations (Anderson & Jirotko, 2015) requiring negotiations over time with participants rather than a one-off tick-box event (Mok et al., 2015), as reflected in guidance from the UK Data Service. This provides that ‘Consent for participation in research, for data use and for data sharing can be considered at different stages of the research, giving participants a clearer view of what participating in the research involves and what the data to be shared consist of’ (UK Data Service, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Rapid technological developments continue to present new challenges in the area of digital ethics, a situation made more difficult by a relative lack of transparency and reflexivity in much of the published internet research. We echo calls for an approach that moves away from reliance on fixed rules to one that highlights the need for continuing and reflexive practice. As qualitative researchers in the field of business and management, we can then work within an iterative framework that goes beyond ‘procedural ethics’, to examine ‘ethics as process’ and which continues throughout the research cycle.

We suggest that far from being ‘problematic’, qualitative research is well suited to this approach given the parallel with demonstrating validity. Traditionally, this might involve constructing a narrative ‘to explain ... what was done and why’ in order to demonstrate ‘why and how the [research]

findings are legitimate’ (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 79). As Mason (2002, p. 190) concludes, the best way to demonstrate validity is to ‘explain how you came to the conclusion that your methods were valid’. Applied to digital ethics, and in the absence of more definitive rules, we suggest that working through the type of questions identified in say the AoIR guidelines in order to explain how you came to the conclusion that your methods were ethical may be the best way to demonstrate ethical compliance. We acknowledge that this may be an imperfect tool given that we as researchers have to accept our lack of perfect self-knowledge and that we may also be using such a narrative as a ‘device to invite trust’ (Hardy et al., 2001, p. 534). Perhaps all one can do, following Leitch and Palmer (2010), is to be explicit, as best one can, about one’s decision-making as a researcher in terms of the ethical decisions we have made.

Note

- 1 You can read more about Rebecca and Katrina’s research at: <http://ageatwork.wordpress.com/> and follow them on twitter @ageatwork.

REFERENCES

- Amis, J.M., and Silk, M.L. (2008). The philosophy and politics of quality in qualitative organizational research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 11(3), 456–80.
- Anderson, R.J., and Jirotko M. (2015). Ethical praxis in digital social research. In P. Halfpenny and R. Procter (Eds.), *Innovations in Digital Research Methods* (pp. 271–96). London: Sage.
- Barnes, S.B. (2006). A privacy paradox: Social networking in the United States. *First Monday*, 11(9), <http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/1394/1312>.
- Barratt, M.J. (2012). The efficacy of interviewing young drug users through online chat. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 31(4), 566–72.

- Bassett, E., and O'Riordan, K. (2002). Ethics of Internet research: Contesting the human subjects research model. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 4(3), 233–47.
- Beaulieu, A., and Estalella, A. (2012). Rethinking research ethics for mediated settings. *Information Communication & Society*, 15(1), 23–42.
- Beninger, K., Fry, A., Jago, N., Lepps, H., Nass, L., and Silvester, H. (2014). *Research Using Social Media: Users' Views*. London: NatCen.
- Bishop, L. (2007). A reflexive account of reusing qualitative data: Beyond primary/secondary dualism. *Sociological Research Online*, 12(3), available at www.socresonline.org.uk/12/3/2.html (Accessed on 22 April, 2016).
- boyd, d. (2006). Why youth ♥ social network sites: The role of networked publics in teenage social life. In D. Buckingham (Ed.), *MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Learning – Youth, Identity and Digital Media* (pp. 119–42). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Bradley, S.K., and Carter, B. (2012). Reflections on the ethics of Internet newsgroup research. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 49(5), 625–30.
- Brent Zook, K. (2015, 23 September). Academics: Leave your ivory towers and pitch your work to the media. *The Guardian*, available at www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2015/sep/23/academics-leave-your-ivory-towers-and-pitch-your-work-to-the-media (Accessed on 22 October, 2015).
- British Psychological Society. (2007). *Report of the Working Party on Conducting Research on the Internet: Guidelines for Ethical Practice in Psychological Research Online*. Leicester, UK: British Psychological Society.
- British Psychological Society. (2009). *Code of Ethics and Conduct: Guidance Published by the Ethics Committee of the BPS*. Leicester, UK: British Psychological Society.
- British Psychological Society. (2013). *Ethics Guidelines for Internet-Mediated Research* (Vol. INF206/1.2013). Leicester, UK: British Psychological Society.
- British Psychological Society. (2014). *Code of Human Research Ethics* (Vol. INF180/12.2014). Leicester, UK: British Psychological Society.
- Broadcasting Standards Commission. (1999). *Regulating the Internet: Briefing Update* (Vol. No. 4). London: Broadcasting Standards Commission.
- Buchanan, E. (2010). Internet research ethics: Past, present, future. In C. Ess, M. Consalvo, and R. Burnett (Eds.), *The Blackwell Handbook of Internet Studies*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 83–108.
- Buchanan, E., and Hvizdak, E. (2009). Online survey tools: Ethical and methodological concerns of human research ethics committees. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*, 4(2), 37–48.
- Buchanan, E., and Zimmer, M. (2015). Internet research ethics. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2015 Edition)*, retrieved 16 September 2015, from <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/ethics-internet-research/>.
- Burnap, P., Rana, O.F., Avis, N., Williams, M., Housley, W., Edwards, A., Morgan, J., and Sloan, L. (2015). Detecting tension in online communities with computational Twitter analysis. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 95, 96–108.
- Carpenter, K., and Dittrich, D. (2011). Bridging the distance: Removing the technology buffer and seeking consistent ethical analysis in computer security research. Paper presented at the 1st International Digital Ethics Symposium, Chicago, IL.
- Cassell, C., and Symon, G. (2011). Assessing 'good' qualitative research in the work psychology field: A narrative analysis. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 84(4), 633–50.
- Chen, S.-L.S., Hall, G.J., and Johns, M.D. (2004). Research paparazzi in cyberspace: The voices of the researched. In M.D. Johns, S.-L.S. Chen, and G.J. Hall (Eds.), *Online Social Research: Methods, Issues & Ethics* (pp. 157–75). New York: Peter Lang.
- COSMOS. (2015). COSMOS Ethics Statement. *Collaborative Online Social Media Observatory*. Retrieved from www.cs.cf.ac.uk/cosmos/cosmos-ethics-statement/.
- Dawson, P. (2014). Our anonymous online research participants are not always anonymous: Is this a problem? *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 45(3), 428–37.
- DeLorme, D.E., Sinkhan, G.M., and French, W. (2001). Ethics and the internet: Issues

- associated with qualitative research. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 33(4), 271–86.
- ESRC. (2015a). *ESRC Framework for Research Ethics: Updated January 2015*. Swindon, UK: Economics and Social Research Council.
- ESRC. (2015b). *ESRC Research Data Policy*. Swindon, UK: Economic and Social Research Council.
- Ess, C. (2002). Ethical decision-making and Internet research: Recommendations from the AoIR ethics working committee. Available online: www.aoir.org/reports/ethics.pdf. Approved by AoIR, 27 November 2002.
- Ess, C. (2009). *Digital Media Ethics*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Eynon, R., Fry, J., and Schroeder, R. (2008). The ethics of internet research. *The SAGE Handbook of Online Research Methods* (pp. 23–41). London: Sage.
- Fleischmann, A., and Miller, E.C. (2013). Online narratives by adults with ADHD who were diagnosed in adulthood. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 36(1), 47–60.
- Gosling, S.D., and Mason, W. (2015). Internet research in psychology. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 66, 877–902.
- Hardy, C., Phillips, N., and Clegg, S.R. (2001). Reflexivity in organization and management theory: A study of the production of the research ‘subject’. *Human Relations*, 54(5), 531–60.
- Holtz, P., Kronberger, N., and Wagner, W. (2012). Analyzing internet forums: A practical guide. *Journal of Media Psychology-Theories Methods and Applications*, 24(2), 55–66.
- Hudson, J.M., and Bruckman, A. (2004). ‘Go away’: Participant objections to being studied and the ethics of chatroom research. *The Information Society*, 20, 127–39.
- Hull, G. (2015). Successful failure: What Foucault can teach us about privacy self-management in a world of Facebook and big data. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 17(2), 89–101.
- Kozinets, R.V. (2010). *Netnography: Doing Ethnographic Research Online*. London: Sage.
- Langer, R., and Beckman, S.C. (2005). Sensitive research topics: Netnography revisited. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 8(2), 189–203.
- Leitch, S., and Palmer, I. (2010). Analysing texts in context: Current practices and new protocols for critical discourse analysis in organization studies. *Journal of Management Studies*, 47(6), 1194–212.
- Mann, C., and Stewart, F. (2000). *Internet Communication and Qualitative Research: A Handbook for Researching Online*. London: Sage.
- Marcus, M.A., Westra, H.A., Eastwood, J.D., Barnes, K.L., and Mobilizing Minds Research Group. (2012). What are young adults saying about mental health? An analysis of internet blogs. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 14(1), e17.
- Markham, A. (2005). The methods, politics and ethics of representation in online ethnography. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed., pp. 793–820). Thousand Oaks, CA and London: Sage.
- Markham, A., and Buchanan, E. (2012). *Ethical Decision-Making and Internet Research: Recommendations from the AOIR Ethics Committee* (Version 2.0). Association of Internet Researchers, available at <https://aoir.org/reports/ethics2.pdf> (Accessed on 16 October, 2015).
- Marres, N. (2012). The redistribution of methods: On intervention in digital social research, broadly conceived. *Sociological Review*, 60, 139–65.
- Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- McKee, H.A., and Porter, J.E. (2009). *The Ethics of Internet Research: A Rhetorical, Case-Based Process*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Meeder, B., Tam, J., Kelley, P.G., and Cranor, L.F. (2010). RT@ IWantPrivacy: Widespread violation of privacy settings in the Twitter social network. *Web 2.0 Security and Privacy*. Retrieved 21 October 2015, from www.cs.cmu.edu/~jdtam/Documents/Meeder-SNSP2010.pdf.
- Michael, G.J. (2015). Who’s afraid of WikiLeaks? Missed opportunities in political science research. *Review of Policy Research*, 32(2), 175–99.
- Mok, T.M., Cornish, F., and Tarr, J. (2015). Too much information: Visual research ethics in the age of wearable cameras. *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science*, 49(2), 309–22.

- Morison, T., Gibson, A.F., Wigginton, B., and Crabb, S. (2015). Online research methods in psychology: Methodological opportunities for critical qualitative research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 12(3), 223–32.
- Paechter, C. (2013). Researching sensitive issues online: Implications of a hybrid insider/outsider position in a retrospective ethnographic study. *Qualitative Research*, 13(1), 71–86.
- Palfrey, J. (2010). Four phases of internet regulation. *Social Research*, 77(3), 981–96.
- Phillips, N., and Hardy, C. (2002). *Discourse Analysis: Investigating Processes of Social Construction*. London: Sage.
- Pritchard, K., and Whiting, R. (2012). Autopilot? A reflexive review of the piloting process in qualitative e-research. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 7(3), 338–53.
- Pritchard, K., and Whiting, R. (2014). Baby boomers and the lost generation: On the discursive construction of generations at work. *Organization Studies*, 35(11), 1605–26.
- Pritchard, K., and Whiting, R. (2015). Taking stock: A visual analysis of gendered ageing. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 22(5), 510–28.
- Pritchard, K., and Whiting, R. (2018). Analysing Web Images. In C. Cassell, A. L. Cunliffe and G. Grandy (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods* (Vol. 2, pp. 282–97). London: Sage.
- Procter, R., Vis, F., and Voss, A. (2013). Reading the riots on Twitter: Methodological innovation for the analysis of big data. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 16(3), 197–214.
- Procter, R., Voss, A., and Lvov, I. (2015). Audience research and social media data: Opportunities and challenges. *Participations: Journal of Audience Reception Studies*, 12(1), 470–93.
- Richards, J. (2012). What has the internet ever done for employees? A review, map and research agenda. *Employee Relations*, 34(1): 22–43.
- Roberts, L.D. (2015). Ethical issues in conducting qualitative research in online communities. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 12(3), 314–25.
- Roberts, L.D., Smith, L.M., and Pollock, C.M. (2008). Ethical issues in conducting online research. In M. Khosrow-Pour (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology* (2nd ed., pp. 1443–9). Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference.
- Rodriguez, J. (2013). Narrating dementia: Self and community in an online forum. *Qualitative Health Research*, 23(9), 1215–27.
- Saunders, B., Kitzinger, J., and Kitzinger, C. (2015). Participant anonymity in the internet age: From theory to practice. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 12(2), 125–37.
- Schotanus-Dijkstra, M., Havinga, P., Van Ballegoijen, W., Delfosse, L., Mokkenstorm, J., and Boon, B. (2014). What do the bereaved by suicide communicate in online support groups? A content analysis. *Crisis – The Journal of Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention*, 35(1), 27–35.
- Schultze, U., and Mason, R.O. (2012). Studying cyborgs: Re-examining internet studies as human subjects research. *Journal of Information Technology*, 27(4), 301–12.
- Sharf, B.F. (1999). The ethics of doing naturalistic discourse research on the internet. In S. Jones (Ed.), *Doing Internet Research: Critical Issues and Methods for Examining the Net* (pp. 243–56). Thousand Oaks, CA and London: Sage.
- Sharkey, S., Jones, R., Smithson, J., Hewis, E., Emmens, T., Ford, T., and Owens, C. (2011). Ethical practice in internet research involving vulnerable people: Lessons from a self-harm discussion forum study (SharpTalk). *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 37(12), 752–8.
- Sveningsson Elm, M. (2009). How do various notions of privacy influence decisions in qualitative internet research? In A. Markham and N. Baym (Eds.), *Internet Inquiry: Conversations about Method* (pp. 69–87). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Trevisan, F., and Reilly, P. (2014). Ethical dilemmas in researching sensitive issues online: Lessons from the study of British disability dissent networks. *Information Communication & Society*, 17(9), 1131–46.
- UK Data Service. (2015). Consent for data sharing. Retrieved 22 October 2015, from <http://ukdataservice.ac.uk/manage-data/legal-ethical/consent-data-sharing>.

- Van Doorn, N. (2011). Digital spaces, material traces: How matter comes to matter in online performances of gender, sexuality and embodiment. *Media Culture & Society*, 33(4), 531–47.
- Whiteman, N. (2012). *Undoing Ethics: Rethinking Practice in Online Research*. New York: Springer.
- Zimmer, M. (2012). Commentary: Studying cyborgs – Re-examining internet studies as human subjects research. *Journal of Information Technology*, 27(4), 313–14.
- Zimmer, M., and Proferes, N.J. (2014). A topology of Twitter research: Disciplines, methods, and ethics. *Aslib Journal of Information Management*, 66(3), 250–61.

Index

Locators in *italics* refer to figures; those in **bold** refer to tables.

- abduction/retroduction
 - case studies 354–5
 - interpretive social science **39**, 39–41, 47–9
 - positivism 207, 209–10
 - pragmatism 59
- Aboriginal peoples 154–5, 162
 - see also* indigenous research
- abstraction, critical realism 207–11
- abstract thinking, Chinese culture 498
- academia
 - characterising qualitative research 2–5
 - ethnography 259
 - indigenous research 156–7, 168–70
 - key challenges 5–7
 - positivism 24–6
 - poststructuralism 86–7
 - ‘publish or perish’ 169–70
 - writing for 534, 537–41
 - writing styles 417–19
 - see also* journals; rigor in research; writing up
- access for research 465–8, 477
 - consequences of denial 475–7
 - critical distance 368
 - cross-gender interviews recruitment 406–11
 - cultural context 473–5
 - digital ethics 567–73
 - ethical context 472–3
 - ethnomethodology 228
 - how to gain 468–72
 - organisations 368, 466–7, 470, 473–5
 - recruitment of participants 481–3, 490
- Acker, Joan 143
- Ackroyd, S. 206, **207**, 207
- action orientation, Chinese context 498
- action research 286–8, 303–5
 - case studies 292–5, 297–300, 301–3
 - concluding the process 300–3
 - critical distance 365
 - distinctive features 289–91, **304**
 - historical-conceptual framework 288–9
 - process of 291–6
 - settings and tools 292, 293, 296–300
 - types of 289
 - see also* participatory action research
- activism, decolonialism 121–2
- Adam, L. 403
- Adamson, M. **436**
- Addams, Jane 55
- Adib, A. **436**
- Adler, P. 489
- Adler, P. A. 489
- advertising, hermeneutics 197
 - see also* marketing
- advisory boards, action research 291, 293, 295, 301–2
- Agar, Michael 277
- age, indigenous cultures 163–4
- agency
 - poststructuralism 92–3
 - social constructivism 180
 - strategy as practice perspective 330, 339–40
 - subaltern postcolonial studies 73, 74
- Agustín, L. R. **441**
- Albert, S. 309, 311
- Alcadipani, R. 471, 475
- Allred, P. 552
- Althusser, L. 92
- Aluli-Meyer, M. 499–500
- Alvesson, Mats
 - organisational identity 317
 - recruitment of participants 481
 - reflexivity 8, 378, 381
 - rigor in research 520, 524
- Amazon, working hours 253–4
- Amrute, S. **436**
- analytical method, critical realism 207–10
- analytic thinking, cultural context 498
 - see also* data analysis
- Anand, N. 109
- Angel, Kathleen 149–50
- anonymity 475, 551, 564–5, 566–9, 571–3
 - see also* informed consent
- anthropology
 - ethnography 259–60
 - organisational ethnography 273
- anticolonialism 121
- anti-realism movement 278
- AoIR guidelines 565, 566, 567, 572, 575
- Appadurai, A. 557
- approaches *see* methodologies; research design approaches
- appropriation, methodologies 124, 125–6
- archaeology, critical study of management 76
- Archer, M. S. 209–10
- Ashcraft, K. L. 481
- Atal, Yogesh 504

- Atewologun, D. **436**
 Atkinson, P. 364
 audiences, writing for 532–4, **533**
 academics 533–4, 537–41
 business professionals 534, 542–3
 general public 534, 543–4
 organisations 534, 543
 students 534, 542
 writing plans 534–7
 authenticity of research 391–2, 489
 see also voice
 auto-ethnographies
 feminist methodologies 146
 observant participation 261, 262
 process research 321–2
 autonomisation, writing up 532
 autonomous human subjects 552–3
 axial coding 21
 axiological neutrality 261
 axiology, indigenous research 161–2, 166
- Badley, G. F. 544
 Bakhtin, M. 150
 Balogun, J. 328–9, 331, 340
 Banerjee, Subhabrata B. 126
 Bantu people 158
 Barad, Karen 147
 Barley, Steve 45–7, 518–19, 524
 Barnes, S. B. 567–8
 Barnum, A. J. **436**
 Barratt, M. J. 573
 Barthes, R. 91
 Bartunek, Jean 529
 Beckman, S. C. 570–1
 Bell, E. 105, 368
 Bell, E. L. J. E. **437**, 448–9
 Bennett, M. 388–9
 Bentley, Arthur 63–4
 Berger, P. 176, 368
 Bhaskar, Roy 202–3, 355
 Bhattacharya, K. 555
 bias 372
 big data approaches 570–1
 ‘big tent’ criteria 6, 518–19
 biology, embodied approach 256–7
 Bittner, Egon 42, 45, 221
 Blair-Loy, M. 402
 Block, D. **437**
 blog posts, writing for 544
 Boddy, David 469
 bodies
 feminist methodologies 141, 148
 personal context 419–22
 political context 417–19
 practical context 415, 422–6
 writing through 415–26
 see also embodied approaches
- Boogaard, B. **437**
 books, writing for 541
 Borchorst, A. 433
 Bourdieu, P.
 embodied approach 256
 habitus 258
 intersectionality 450
 observant participation 264
 Bourgeois, L. J. 351
 Bourke, B. 388
 Boyle, E. **437**
 Bradbury, H. 287
 Brandom, Robert 55
 Brayton, S. **437**
 Brewer, J. D. 368
 Brinkmann, S. 239
 British Psychological Society guidelines 563, 565–6, 567, 569, 572
 Brotman, S. **441**
 Brown, A. D. 315, 316
 Brown, J. L. 197
 Bryman, A. 105
 Buchanan, David 467, 469
 Buckle, J. L. 406
 Buddhism, epistemologies 496–7
 Buddhist systems methodology (BSM) 509
 Bünz, A. **437**
 bureaucracy, ethical oversight regimes 552, 554–5, 556–7
 Burrell, G. 58, 198
 business
 aim of handbook 1–2, 10
 characterising qualitative research 2–5
 digital ethics 563–5
 ethnomethodology 221–4
 international 25, 125
 key challenges 5–7
 mixed methods 108–9
 neo-colonialism 125
 positivism 24–5
 pragmatism 64–6
 recruitment of participants 490
 writing for 534, 542–3
- Butler, Judith 81, 141
 Butterworth, M. **439**
 Butz, K. **438**
- Calás, Marta 69–70
 Callan, Erin 264
 Calvey, D. 475–6
 Cameron, Julie 423–4
 Canada
 Aboriginal peoples 154–5
 ‘publish or perish’ 169–70
 capitalism
 critical realism 206
 critical study of management 70–2
 Carmel, Simon 468, 470

- Carrim, N. **438**
- case studies 345–6, 356–7
- action research 292–5, 297–300, 301–3
 - critical distance 362
 - criticisms 350–2
 - Eisenhardt vs Yin 345–6, 347–8, 349–50
 - intersectionality **436–45**
 - positivism 23–4, 346–8, 348, 350–2, 353, 356
 - renaissance 352–6
 - Thomas and Myers 356
 - writing up 539–40, 542–3
- Cassell, Catherine
- action research 289
 - critical distance 367, 372–3, 374
 - quality criteria 371
 - reflexivity 380–1
- caste system, India 552–3
- categorisation, intersectionality 446, 447–8
- Caulley, D. N. 533
- causal power
- case studies 353, 355–6
 - critical realism 202–3, 205
- Challiol, H. 111
- Chandrasekara, Ishani 127–8
- Chapman, M. **438**
- Charmaz, K. 235, 236, 237, 239, 240
- Chau, V. S. 362
- Chen, X. 240, 504
- Cherim, S. 315
- Chicago School, action research 288
- Chilisa, B. 157, 158, 160, 161, 163, 167–8, 169
- China
- characterising qualitative research 3
 - cultural context 497–9, 502
- Chio, Vanessa C.M. 126–7
- class, feminist methodologies 149
- see also* intersectionality
- Classical Pragmatism 54
- see also* pragmatism
- Classical SAP research design 334–6, **335**
- clients
- action research 291, 292–3, 294, 295–6
 - critical distance 366–7
 - see also* audiences, writing for
- co-construction 177–9
- coding
- Chinese epistemology 498
 - grounded theory 21–2, 237–8, 247–9
 - process research 321
 - rigor in research 527–8
- cognitive approaches
- embodied approach 255
 - habitus 257–8
 - knowledge-based economy 254
 - observant participation 265–6
- Cole, B. A. 448
- Cole, E. R. 430, 448–9, 451
- collectivist culture 509–10
- Collier, A. 212–13
- Collins, P. H. 434–5, 448, 452–4
- colonialism 119–20
- critical issues 129–31
 - future of research 131–2
 - glocalisation 505
 - indigenous research 168–9
 - methodologies 495–6
 - resisting 120–2
 - see also* postcolonialism
- common-sense knowledge
- ethnomethodology 220, 221, 227
 - interpretive social science 36–9, **38**, 41–2
 - pragmatism 60
- communication technologies 4
- community
- critical study of management 71–2
 - indigenous research 159, 162
- comparative ethnography 277
- Comprehensive SAP Research Design **335**, 337–8
- Compte, August 17–18
- conceptual specification, grounded theory 247–8
- concrete thinking, Chinese context 498
- conference papers, writing for 541
- confidentiality 475, 551, 564–5, 566–9
- see also* informed consent
- Confucian cultures, sampling 505–6
- consent *see* informed consent
- constant comparative method 237–8, 247–8
- constructionism 173–4
- case study identity at work 179–81
 - co-construction 177–9
 - epistemologies 175–6
 - intersubjectivity 174, 177–9
 - ontology 176–7
 - paradigm of 174
 - reflexivity 174, 177–9
 - terminology and meaning 174–5, 181
- constructivism
- case studies 350, 352, 354, 355
 - grounded theory 240–1
 - indigenous research 158
 - positivism 22, 23–4
 - terminology and meaning 174–5
- constructivist grounded theory 22
- consultants, critical distance 366–7
- contextualism, critical distance 366
- conversation analysis (CA)
- Chinese epistemology 498
 - ethnomethodology 218
- Corbin, J. M. 21, 237
- Corlett, Sandra 179, 382, 385, 391, 393
- Corley, K. G. 213, 522, 528
- Corona, V. **437**
- corporate culture, knowledge-based organisations 263, 264–7
- see also* organisational identity
- corporate ethnography 276

- Corradi, G. 330
 COSMOS project 570–1
 covert research 475–6
 Crabtree, A. 228
 credibility 522–3
 Crenshaw, Kimberlé 430, 431, 432–3, 434, 453, 500
 creolisation 507, 508–10
 Creswell, J. W. 104, 112–13
 critical distance 361–3, 374–5
 philosophical framework 364–5
 researcher's role 361, 362–3, 364–7
 social relationships 362, 367–70
 tools 370–4
 see also positionality
 critical ethnography 455
 critical interpretivism 128
 Critical Management Studies (CMS) 89
 critical narrative-ethnography 128
 critical realism 201–2, 212–13
 analytical method 207–10
 case studies 356
 data collection 207
 exemplar analysis 210–12
 mechanisms 205–6, 209
 mixed methods 108
 ontology 202–5, 204–5, 212–13
 research design 206–7, **208**
 see also realism
 critical reflexivity, action research 289
 critical study of management 69–70, 81–2
 diverse economies 70–1
 feminism 79–81
 postcolonial theory 72–4
 psychoanalytic approach 77–9
 researcher's location 70
 researcher's role 74–7
 transformative effects 71–2, 74
 cross-cultural management (CCM) 125
 see also cultural context
 Crotty, M.
 constructionism 174–5, 176
 postmodernism 88
 reflexivity 382
 Crowhurst, I. 471–2
 Cruells López, M. **438**
 Cruickshank, J. 205
 Cuádras, G. H. 449
 cultural context
 access 473–5
 characterising qualitative research 3–4
 corporate culture 263, 264–7
 critical realism 209
 critical study of management 72–3
 ethical oversight regimes 551–9
 ethnography 259–61
 hermeneutics 186, 187–8
 indigenous research 157, 159, 160–2, 163–4, 500–8
 intersectionality 500
 non-Western approaches 496–500
 organisational ethnographies 270–1, 276
 Pakistani mothers case study 409–11
 researcher identity 388
 see also indigenous knowledge
 cultural distance 259–60
 Cunliffe, A.
 access for research 471, 475
 critical distance 363, 364
 process research 321
 reflexivity 379, 396
 strategy as practice perspective 332, 340
 Czarniawska, Barbara 274
 Daellenbach, U. 111
 dancing, constructionism case study 179–81
 data analysis
 critical distance 372
 ethnomethodology 228–9
 feminism 146–7
 grounded theory 237–9, 250
 how many participants 487–90
 intersectionality 450–3
 process research 311–12, 314, 315–16, 317–18, 320–2, 323
 strategy as practice perspective 333, **335**, 338, 340–1
 data collection
 access 468–71
 case studies 23–4, 354
 covert research 474–5
 critical distance 362–3, 369–70
 critical realism 207
 cross-gender interviews 403–6, 407–11
 digital ethics 564–5, 572
 digitalisation 27
 ethnomethodology 225–9
 feminism 146–7, 149
 grounded theory 21–2, 234, 241, 246–7
 key challenges 6–7
 mixed methods 106–7, 108–10
 observant participation 264
 positivism 19–20
 presentation of 522
 process research **310**, 311, 312–14, 315, 317–18, 320–2
 recruitment of participants 481–4
 rigor in research 521–2, 523–4, 526–30
 strategy as practice perspective 333, 334–6, **335**, 337, 338, 339
 see also access for research; fieldwork
 Davis, K. 447
 Dawson, P. 574
 Day, S. 386–7, 391
 Dean, J. J. 448
 decision-making, ethnomethodology 223–4
 decolonisation
 ethical oversight regimes 557–8
 indigenous research 156–7

- non-Western methods 500–1, 510
- research 121–2
- deconstruction 94–6
- Deconstructive Action Research 289
- deductive approaches
 - case studies 350, 353, 354
 - hermeneutics 186–7
- Delbridge, R. 206
- delimitation, grounded theory 248–9
- Deloria, V., Jr. 500
- Denzin, N. K. 558
- depth ontology 203–4
- Derrida, Jacques 94, 95–6
- Descartes, Rene 57
- descriptive case studies 23, 280
- detective logic 60
- Deutssch, N. L. 150–1
- DeVault, M. 146–7
- Dewey, John 55, 57, 60–2, 63–4, 65
- dialectics
 - constructionism 174, 177
 - mixed methods 108
- Diamond, L. M. **439**
- Diamond, Michael 79
- '*différance*', poststructuralism 95
- 'difference'
 - feminist methodologies 148
 - intersectionality 435, 452–3
 - poststructuralism 90, 95, 98
- digital ethics 562–3
 - business and management 563–5
 - future of 573–5
 - key debates 567–73
 - overarching tensions 565–7
- digital identity 570, 571–2, 573–4
- digitalisation 26–7
- disciplinary areas
 - characterising qualitative research 2–5
 - ethnography 259
 - positivism 24–6
- discourses
 - Chinese epistemology 497–9
 - critical study of management 74–8
 - poststructuralism 92–3
- discrimination
 - intersectionality 142–3, 430–1, 435, 500
 - part-time mothers case study 403–4
- dissertations (PhDs) 540–1
- distance *see* critical distance; cultural distance
- Dittrich, K. 332
- diverse economies 70–1
- diversity of qualitative methods 1–2, 3–4
- division of labour, gendered 256–7
- documentary method, ethnomethodology 220
- documentation, positivism 20
- 'domain specific' theories, critical realism 205
- Dottolo, A. L. **439**
- Dougherty, D. 47–9
- dualism
 - feminism 143
 - pragmatism 57, 62
- Duberley, J. 364, 379
- Dubois, A. 354, 355
- Dunleavy, P. 544
- Dunne, D. D. 47–9
- Durand, R. 332
- Dwyer, S. C. 406
- Dyer, J. 110–11
- Dyer, W. G. 350–1
- Eatough, Virginia 278–9, 393–6
- Eisenhardt, Kathleen
 - case studies 345–6, 347–8, 348, 349–52, 354, 355
 - observant participation 266
 - positivism 24
- elders, indigenous cultures 163–4
- Elsbach, Kim 529
- Ely, M. 533
- embodied approaches 253–4, 267
 - bodies 422
 - observant participation 260–7
 - organisations and persons 255–60
 - writing up 425, 426
- emergence in research 236–7, 481
- emotions, hermeneutics 199
- employees, critical distance 366
- employment *see* workplace
- engaged (reflexive) ethnography 276–7
- 'engagement-distance' 363
 - see also* insider/outsider relationship
- engagement, postcolonialism 126
- entities, critical realism 202–3
- entrepreneurship, mixed methods 102
- epistemic cultures 3–4
- epistemologies
 - action research 289
 - constructionism 175–6
 - cultural context 496–500
 - feminism 138, 140–3
 - indigenous research 159–61, 502–3, 506–7
 - intersectionality 434–5, 446
 - reflexivity 379, 382, **394–5**
 - strategy as practice perspective 339
- equal exchange 159
- e-research 4
 - see also* digital ethics
- Ermine, W. 155
- ESRC Research Ethics Framework 547–8, 551, 566, 567, 569, 574
- essences, critical realism 202–3
- Essers, C. **439**
- ethical codes 547–9, 563, 565–6, 569
- ethical context
 - access 472–3
 - Chinese epistemology 498
 - constructionism 174

- covert research 475–6
- cross-gender interviews 401, 403–5, 408–11
- ethnomethodology 228
- globalisation 504
- indigenous research 170
- multiple worldviews 131
- recruitment of participants 483
- see also* digital ethics
- ethical oversight regimes 546–7, 558–9
 - autonomous human subjects 552–3
 - consequences of ethics creep 547–50
 - decolonisation 557–8
 - informed consent 550–2
 - studying research practices 553–7
- ethics as process 574–5
- ethnic context
 - colonialism 122
 - intersectionality 430–1, 433–4, 448–50, 451–2
 - Pakistani and British mothers case study 402–6, 409–11
 - see also* indigenous research
- ethnocentrism 123
- ethnographic sensibility 272–3
- ethnography
 - access 470, 474
 - action research 297–8, 299–300
 - critical distance 364–5, 368
 - embodied approach 254, 258–61
 - interpretive social science 43–4
 - intersectionality 455
 - observant participation 260–7
 - process research 318, 319
 - strategy as practice perspective 331, 334–6, 338, 340
 - see also* organisational ethnography
- ethnomethodology 217–18, 229
 - business 221–4
 - Garfinkel, Harold 217, 218–19
 - interpretive social science 41–2
 - key concepts 220
 - management 221–4
 - methodologies 217, 219, 224–9
 - organisations 221–2, 224–5
 - research challenges 228–9
 - social order 218–19
- Eurocentrism
 - indigenous research 168–9
 - postcolonialism 126
 - see also* Western approaches
- Europe
 - characterising qualitative research 3–4
 - mixed methods 102
- evaluation of research
 - reflexivity 390–2, **394–5**
 - rigor 516–17
- exemplar analysis, critical realism 210–12
- Expanded SAP Research Design **335**, 336–7
- Experimental Action Research 289
- explanatory case studies 23, 353
- explanatory mixed methods 107, 111
- exploratory case studies 23
- exploratory mixed methods 107, 108–10
- extant theory 540
- extensive research, critical realism 206
- Fachin, F. F. 318
- facilitation, action research 297
- faith, hermeneutics 194–5, 197
- Fanon, Frantz 121
- Farjoun, M. 65
- Fayard, Anne-Laure 276
- Federation of Nursery Schools case study 292–4
- feminism 138–9, 150–1
 - critical study of management 79–81
 - data analysis 146–7
 - epistemologies 138, 140–3
 - history of 139
 - intersectionality 142–3, 455
 - methodologies 140, 143–6
 - postcolonialism 127–8
 - research topics 144
 - writing up 147–50, 418–19
- Fendt, J. 240
- fieldwork
 - access 469–70
 - critical distance 366–70
 - cultural context 499
 - ethnography 258–9, 270–2
 - indigenous research 130–1
 - intersectionality 453
 - organisational ethnography 273, 274–5, 278, 281
 - recruitment of participants 482–3
 - see also* data collection; methodologies
- films
 - access for research 476–7
 - intersectionality 433–4
- Findlay, Len 155
- first order concepts, interpretive social science 34–5, 44–5, 50
- first-wave feminism 139
- Fletcher, D. 174
- focus groups 499
 - see also* group research
- focus in research 535
- foregrounding, hermeneutics 194–5
- Fotaki, M. 148
- Foucault, M.
 - critical study of management 74–7
 - ethical oversight regimes 549
 - feminism 141
 - poststructuralism 89, 91–2, 98
 - power 388
- frame analysis 45–6
- freerfall writing 423–4
- Freud, Lucien 78–9, 195
- Fulla Doll 507–8, 508

- functionalism 58
- fusion, cultural 507
- 'fusion of horizons' 189, 191
- Futuretech partnership 210–12
- Gabriel, Yiannis 79
- Gadamer, H. G. 188–9, 190–4, 195–6, 199
- Gadde, L.- E. 354, 355
- Gaffikin, M. 469
- Galilei, Galileo 17
- Gallagher, S. 188
- Gallop, Jane 419
- Gálvez, González 497
- Garfinkel, Harold
 - ethnomethodology 217, 218–19, 222, 223, 227, 229
 - interpretive social science 41–2, 43, 45
- Garud, Raghu 524
- Gastaldo, Denise 503, 509–10
- gatekeepers 465, 466–7, 468, 471–2, 482
 - see also* access for research
- Gatrell, C. J. 401, 402, 404
- Geertz, C. 259–60
- gender
 - bodies 418–19, 421
 - constructionism 176, 177–8
 - division of labour 256–7
 - feminist methodologies 141–2
 - intersectionality 429, 430, 433–4, 448–50, 451–2
 - interviews cross-gender 401–13
 - muted masculinities 400, 405–6, 407–13
 - recruiting research participants 406–11
 - reflexive research 381, 384, 392–3
 - research process 411–13
- generalisability
 - case studies 349, 350, 355–6
 - critical distance 362
 - positivism 25–6
- geographical context, researcher 70
- Gephart, R. P. 44, 222, 223, 225, 236
- 'gestural conversation' 63
- Gherardi, S. 330
- Giardina, M. D. 558
- Gibson, B. 236, 239
- Gibson, Julie 71–2
- Gillies, V. 552
- Gill, R. 146, **439**
- Gilmore, S. and Kenny, K. 392
- Gioia, D. A. 213, 522, 528
- Gioia method
 - grounded theory 237
 - interpretive social science 50
 - process research 312
 - rigor in research 517
- Glaser, Barney
 - grounded theory 20–2, 234–41, 246–50, 349
 - rigor 516–17
- globalisation
 - ethical oversight regimes 546–7
 - grounded theory 240
 - positivism 26–7
- global subjectivity 72–3
- glocalisation 504–5, 506
- Gobo, G. 238
- Goffman, E. 45, 46
- Govco partnership 210–12
- Graham, Katherine 71–2, 401
- Grandy, Gina 387, 392
- Grant, A. 108–9
- Grills, S. 431, 533
- grounded theorising 233–4, 235, 238–41
- grounded theory 233–4
 - case studies 349–50
 - foundational pillars 236–8, 242
 - future of 242
 - interpretive social science 48
 - methodologies 235–6, 239–42, 246
 - origins 234–5
 - positivism 20–2
 - principles 246–50
 - quality of 241–2
 - recruitment of participants 486
 - rigor in research 516–17, 530
 - terminology and meaning 233–4, 238–41
- group research
 - action research 296–7, 298, 300–3
 - indigenous research 166–7
 - strategy as practice perspective 337
 - Thai cultural context 499, 506
- Guba, E. G.
 - constructionism 174, 177
 - grounded theory 241
 - reflexivity 391
 - rigor in research 517, 525
- Guerrier, Y. **436**
- Guta, A. 549
- Habermas, J. 195–6
- 'habit' (pragmatism) 61–2
- habitus
 - embodied approach 257–8
 - ethnography 261
- half-said, feminist methodologies 144–5, 146–7
- Halrynjo, S. **440**
- Hammersley, M. 364, 549
- Hancock, A.- M. 447, 448
- handwriting 423, 424–5
- Hanson, W. 113–14
- haphazard sampling 487
- Haraway, D. 455, 506
- Harding, S. 383–4
- Harrison, Spencer 526, 529
- Hart, M. A. 158–9
- Hartman, J. 236, 239

- 'harvesting' (online) 564
- Hassan, Fahad 400, 401–13
- Hatch, M. J. 320–1
- Hatch, N. 110–11
- hate speech 148–9
- Hawaii, cultural context 499–500
- Haynes, K.
 - critical distance 374
 - feminist methodologies 146
 - reflexivity 382, 385, 386
- Healthcare Organisation case study 294–5
- Healy, G. **440**
- Heath, Christian 223, 224
- Heidegger, M. 187–8
- Heikes, E. J. 405
- Helin, J. 150
- hermeneutics
 - circles 186–9, 198–9
 - historicity 185–6, 193, 194–6
 - management studies 196–9
 - meaning 189–92, 198
 - motivations 194–6
 - organisation studies 196–9
 - sensemaking 192–4, 195–6, 198–9
 - significance 191–2
 - terminology and meaning 185
- heterogeneous sampling 485–6
- Hill, Elina 155–6, 168–9
- Hindman, Jane 418–19
- Hindman, M. D. 452
- Hindmarsh, Jon 219, 223, 224, 229
- historical context
 - action research 288–9
 - colonialism 119
 - feminism 139
 - positivism 17–18
- historicity, hermeneutics 185–6, 193, 194–6
- Hoeyer, K. 550
- Ho, Karen 469–70
- holistic thinking, cultural context 498
- Hollensbe, Elaine 523, 529–30
- Holton, J. A. 236, 237
- Holton, Judith 179
- Holvino, E. **444**
- homogenous sampling 485–6
- homosexuality
 - intersectionality 449
 - poststructuralism 94
- Hosking, D. 175, 177
- hot spots (data) 147
- Housley, W. 223–4
- Howard-Grenville, Jennifer 519, 521, 522, 523, 524
- Huberman, M. 372
- Huff, A. S. 328–9, 331
- human resource management 89
- Humphreys, M. 315, 316
- hybridity, cultural 507
- hybridity, postcolonialism 121, 127
- hybrid-liminal methods 124, 127–8
- identity *see* digital identity; organisational identity; researcher identity
- immanent critique, critical realism 209–10
- immersive research 271–2
- imperialism 120–1, 168
 - see also* colonialism
- inclusive reflexivity 278–9
- indexicality 220
- India, ethical oversight regimes 552–7
- indigenous knowledge
 - epistemology 159–60
 - ethical oversight regimes 557–8
 - narratives 165–6
 - ontology 159
 - postcolonialism 128–9, 131
- indigenous research 154–5, 169–70
 - academia 156–7, 168–9
 - axiology 161–2, 166–7
 - creolisation 508–10
 - critical issues 129–31
 - cultural context 496–500
 - decolonisation 156–7, 500–1
 - epistemologies 159–61, 502–3
 - future of 131–2
 - intersectionality 500
 - methodologies 124, 125–6, 128–9, 163–4
 - ontology 158–9
 - paradigm of 157–8, 161
 - qualitative research 164–8
 - Western context 131–2, 155, 495–6
 - and Western methods 500–8
- individualism, informed consent 552
- individuals
 - action research 296, **298**
 - positivism 25
 - process research 318
 - see also* researcher's role; self
- Inductive Action Research 289
- inductive approaches
 - case studies 353, 354
 - hermeneutics 186–7
 - rigor in research 529–30
- inequality, intersectionality 448
- information systems 25
 - see also* digitalisation
- informed consent
 - cultural context 498–9
 - digital ethics 570–1, 575
 - ethical oversight regimes 550–2
 - ethnomethodology 228
 - as Western approach 552, 554–5
- innovation
 - methodologies 4–5
 - product development 47–9

- reflexivity 392
- strategy as practice perspective 331–2, 340
- 'inquiry' (pragmatism) 60–1
- insider/outsider relationship
 - critical distance 363
 - cross-gender interviews 406–7, 411–12
 - digital ethics 573
 - indigenous research 164–5
 - organisational ethnography 275
 - power 388–9
- institutional theory 211, 212
- institutions
 - action research 297
 - key challenges 7
 - writing for 534, 543
- instrumentality, access 472
- Intarachamnong, Chareerat 499, 506
- integration, mixed methods 110, 114
- intensive research, critical realism 206
- interactions *see* social interactions
- 'inter-actions', pragmatism 63–4
- international business 25, 125
- Internet *see* digital ethics; social media
- interpersonal relationships *see* social relationships
- interpretation
 - hermeneutics 190–1, 197–8
 - intersectionality 451–3
 - reflexivity 378–9, 380
 - voice 389–90
- interpretive pragmatism 58
- interpretive reflexivity 279
- interpretive social science 33–4
 - contemporary examples 42–3
 - ethnomethodology 41–2
 - future of 49–51
 - natural science 35–6
 - new product development 47–9
 - organisational socialisation 43–4
 - organisations 36–41, **38**, 42, 44–5, 49–51
 - qualitative research 34–5
 - status transformation 44–5
 - technological change 45–7
- interpretivism 23–4
- intersectionality 429–31
 - case studies **436–45**
 - cultural context 500
 - feminism 139, 142–3
 - future of 453–5
 - qualitative research 431–6, 446
 - researcher identity 387–8
 - research process 446–53
- intersubjectivity 174, 177–9
- interviews (job) 224
- interviews (research)
 - access for research 476–7
 - constructionism case study 180–1
 - critical distance 368–9, 370–1
 - critical realism 210
 - cross-gender 401–13
 - cultural context 496–9, 506, 509–10
 - ethical oversight regimes 551–5
 - ethnomethodology 226
 - feminist methodologies 140, 144–5, 146–7
 - indigenous research 165–7
 - interpretive social science 47–8
 - intersectionality 447, 448–9
 - positivism 19–20
 - strategy as practice perspective 337
- investigative journalism 475–6
- Irvine, H. 469
- iteration 526–7, 529, 574–5
- Jack, G. 130–1
- James, L. **440**
- James, William 55, 56
- Janesick, V. J. 489
- Japan, cultural context 509–10
- Jarzabkowski, Paula 275, 338
- Jeffersonian transcription system 229
- Jenkins, S. 206
- job interviews 224
- Johansson, M. **436, 440**
- Johnson, B. 104
- Johnson, G. 328–9, 332–3, 336
- Johnson, P.
 - action research 289
 - quality criteria 371–2
 - reflexivity 379, 390–1
- Jones, R. G. 453
- Jonker, M. **440**
- journals
 - case studies 356
 - constructionism 179
 - feminism 143
 - mixed methods 102, 104–5, 108–9
 - participant justification 491
 - positivism 25
 - rigor in research 521
 - writing for 536, 537–40
 - writing styles 417–19
- Karjalainen, M. 475
- Karlsson, J. 206, **207**, 207
- Karreman, D. 317
- Karunanayake, G. 321, 363
- Kaupapa Māori research 501
- Kawabata, M. 509–10
- Kayseas, B. 159
- Kelly, Gerge 174
- kennedy-macfoy, M. 471–2
- Kets de Vries, Manfred 78–9
- Klein, H. K. 197–8
- Klein, Melanie 78–9
- knowledge

- action research 286–7, 288, 290, 295, 304
- case studies 353, 354, 355, 356
- constructionism 175–6
- Eurocentrism 168–9
- feminism 140–3, 144
- local 128–9
- reflexivity 381–2, 389
- social 219, 220
- see also* common-sense knowledge; epistemologies; indigenous knowledge
- knowledge-based organisations 253–4, 262–5
- Ko, L. T. **440**
- Korean societies, sampling 505–6
- Kovach, Maggie 163, 164–5, 166, 167, 169, 503
- Kreiner, G. E. 517, 522, 526, 528
- Kuhn, Annette 149
- Kvasny, L. **440**
- Lacan, Jacques 77–9
- Ladkin, Donna 420, 423, 425–6
- Langer, R. 570–1
- Langley, Ann 524, 525, 526
- language
 - access 474
 - colonialism 123
 - critical study of management 76–7
 - decolonisation 156
 - feminist methodologies 144–5, 146–7
 - hermeneutics 195–7
 - indigenous research 165
 - poststructuralism 94–6
- Latin America, epistemologies 497
- Lawrence, T. B. 330, 340
- leadership
 - bodies 420–2, 425
 - constructionism 176, 177–8
 - critical distance 366, 368–9
 - ethnomethodology 223–4
- Lee, E. O. **441**
- Lee, Myra 370, 504
- legal context, digital ethics 564–5
- Lewin, Kurt 287, 288, 365
- Lilius, J. 111–12
- liminality 121
- Lincoln, Y. S.
 - constructionism 174, 177
 - grounded theory 241
 - reflexivity 391
 - rigor in research 517, 525
- Linstead, Stephen 126
- literature reviews 539
- Llewellyn, N. 219, 224, 229
- Lloyd-Jones, B. **441**
- local knowledge 128–9
- local research 503–5, 506
- Logie, C. H. **441**
- Lohan, M. 404
- Lombardo, E. 433, **441**
- longitudinal research
 - access 470–1
 - intersectionality 455
 - strategy as practice perspective 331
- Love, C. D. **441**
- Luckmann, T. 176
- Luff, Paul 223, 224
- 'lurking' (online) 564
- Lykke, N. 452
- Lyotard, J.-F. 88
- McCabe, D. 330
- McCalman, James 469
- McConnell, E. **442**
- Mach, Ernst 18
- McMullan, M. 549
- macro strategies 332, 339
- Maitlis, Sally 521, 523, 527
- Malinowski, Bronislaw 259, 364
- Malterud, K. 49–51
- management
 - action research case study 292, 297–9, 301–2
 - aim of handbook 1–2, 10
 - case studies 349, 351, 354, 356–7
 - characterising qualitative research 2–5
 - critical realism 210–12
 - digital ethics 563–5
 - ethical oversight regimes 546–7
 - ethnomethodology 221–4
 - hermeneutics 196–9
 - key challenges 5–7
 - mixed methods 108–9, 112–13
 - positivism 25
 - poststructuralism 89–90
 - pragmatism 64–6
 - recruitment of participants 490
 - strategy as practice perspective 329, 332
 - see also* critical study of management
- Māori research 129, 157, 501
- Mapuche research 497
- Marcus, George E. 274
- marginalisation
 - colonialism 119
 - intersectionality 452
- market exchanges, ethnomethodology 224
- marketing
 - ethnomethodology 226
 - hermeneutics 197
 - positivism 25
- Martin, Paul, Prime Minister of Canada 154, 155
- Marx, Karl 69, 195
- masculinities
 - cross-gender interviews 400, 405–6, 407–13
 - writing up 418–19
- Mason, R. O. 569, 570
- materialism, feminist methodologies 147

- material outcomes, ethnomethodology 227–8
- Mathur, Indian 504
- Matsuda, M. J. 451
- Mavin, Sharon 381, 384, 387, 392–3
- Max-Neef, Manfred A. 127
- Mead, George Herbert 55, 58, 63
- ‘meaning’, hermeneutics 189–92
- media
 - access for research 476–7
 - intersectionality 433–4
 - writing for 543
 - see also* social media
- memoing, grounded theory 249–50
- memories, feminist methodologies 149
- meta-cultures 256
- metanarratives 88
- methodolatriy 149
- methodological pluralism 239–40
- methodologies
 - access 472–4
 - book outline 9
 - case studies 346, 353, 356–7
 - colonialism 495–6
 - creolisation 508–10
 - critical distance 370–1, 373
 - critical realism 207–10, 213
 - digitalisation 27
 - ethical oversight regimes 547
 - ethnography 259–61
 - ethnomethodology 217, 224–9
 - feminism 140, 143–6
 - grounded theory 235–6, 239–42, 246
 - indigenous research 124, 125–6, 128–9, 163–4, 506–7
 - innovation 4–5
 - interpretive social science **40**
 - intersectionality 431, 433–4, 448–53
 - mixed methods 103–7, 108, 114
 - natural and social science 35–6
 - observant participation 260–7
 - postcolonialism 124–32, 496
 - poststructuralism 97–8
 - process research 309
 - reflexivity 383–4, 391, **394–5**
 - sampling 484–91
 - strategy as practice perspective 328–9, 330–2, 339, 340
 - writing plans 536
 - see also* individually named research traditions
 - e.g. positivism*; research design approaches
- Mexico, group interviews 499
- Meyrowitz, J. 505
- Michel, Alexandra 420
- micro strategies 218, 332, 334, 338, 339
- Midgley, G. 496–7
- Mignonac, K. 111
- Miles, Matthew 347, 372
- Mills, C. Wright 276, 467
- Milner, H. R. 388
- mimicry 121
- mindfulness 422
- Mintzberg, H. 19
- Missens, Richard 163–4
- mixed methods 102–3, 114–15
 - examples of studies 108–12
 - implications and recommendations 112–14
 - research in 103–8
- Mmogo-Method 501–2
- mode of influence 70
- mode of inquiry 70
- modernism, case studies 346
- moods, hermeneutics 199
- Moorosi, P. **442**
- morality *see* ethical context
- Morgan, G. 58, 198
- motivations
 - hermeneutics 194–6
 - self-reflexivity 384–5, 386
- moving (writing up) 425–6
- multisitedness, organisational ethnography 274–5
- Munkejord, K. 386
- music, intersectionality 433–4
- Myers, K. 356
- Myers, M. D. 197–8
- Nadin, S. 372–3, 374
- narratives
 - critical distance 365
 - indigenous research 165–6
 - intersectionality 448–9, 450–1, 452
 - postcolonialism 127
 - process research **310**, 314–16, 323
 - strategy as practice perspective 337
- Narváez, R. F. **442**
- natural science, and interpretive social science 35–6
- Nayak, A. 337–8
- neo-colonialism
 - business and management 123
 - ethical oversight regimes 556–7
 - multiple worldviews 131
 - terminology and meaning 120–1
- neo-colonial methods 124, 124–5
- Newhouse, David 160, 169
- Newo Yotina Friendship Centre (NYFC) 162
- new (reflexive) ethnography 276–7
- Neyland, D. 223
- Nietzsche, F.
 - critical distance 362
 - hermeneutics 195
- Nightingale, A. J. **443**
- Nishida, A. **443**
- Nkomo, S. M. **437**, **438**, 448–9
- non-probability sampling 484, 485–6, **486**, 490
- North America *see* United States
- Norway, action research 288
- Nuremberg Medical Trials 550

- Oakley, A.
 - cross-gender interviews 404
 - feminism 143, 144
 - gender 401
- objectivism 22
- objectivist grounded theory 22
- observant participation 260–7
 - see also* participant observation
- observations, positivism 20
- Okereke, K. 433–4
- online research 4
 - see also* digital ethics
- ontology
 - constructionism 176–7
 - critical realism 202–5, 212–13
 - indigenous research 158–9
 - process research 311, 314
- open coding 21, 247
- operationalising intersectionality 434–5, 446
- operations management 25
- opportunistic purposive sampling 487
- oppressions, intersectionality 448, 452–3
- oral culture, indigenous research 165–6
- organisational ethnography 270–3, 281
 - past, present and future 273–7
 - quality criteria 279–81
 - research design approaches 277–9
- organisational identity
 - process as activity 317, 318–19
 - process as evolution 311–12
 - process as narrative 315
 - process as witness 321–2
 - process research 309
- organisational imaginary 255
- organisational partners *see* clients
- organisations
 - access for research 368, 466–7, 470, 473–5
 - action research 289, 303, 304–5
 - case studies 351
 - critical realism 210–12, 213
 - critical study of management 77–8
 - embodied approach 255–67
 - ethnomethodology 221–2, 224–5
 - hermeneutics 196–9
 - interpretive social science 36–41, 42, 44–5, 49–51
 - mixed methods 111
 - poststructuralism 90
 - pragmatism 65
 - process research 308–9
 - strategy as practice perspective 328
 - writing for 534, 543
- Orientalism 120–1
- Orr, Julian 222–3
- Orr, K. 388–9
- Ortiz, S. M. 401–2, 405, 411–12
- ‘other’
 - colonialism 119–20, 122
 - creolisation 507
 - feminist methodologies 148
 - indigenous research 157
- ownership, indigenous research 157
- pacing, grounded theory 250
- Paechter, C. 571, 573
- paradigm of choices 114–15
- para-ethnography 275
- parochialism 123
- Paroutis, S. 334–6
- Parsons, Talcott 218
- participant-focused reflexivity 393
- participant observation
 - ethnomethodology 225
 - interpretive social science 46
 - and observant participation 260, 263–4, 265
 - online 4
- participant recruitment *see* recruitment of participants
- participatory action research
 - and action research 287, 289
 - critical study of management 72
 - indigenous research 167–8, 500–1
 - intersectionality 454–5
- Partington, D. 237
- path-dependency 277
- Patton, M. 114–15
- Pawson, R. 205–6
- peer reviews
 - critical distance 374
 - rigor in research 521
 - writing for 537, 539, 539–40
- Peirce, Charles Sanders 55, 57, 59–60
- Pena Ovalle, P. **443**
- Perera, Suvendrini 130
- performativity 389
- personal context
 - bodies 419–22
 - digital ethics 564–5
- personal reflexivity 384–90
 - see also* reflexivity
- Peticca-Harris, A. 475
- Pettigrew, A. 334–6
- PhD dissertations 540–1
- Phillips, Mary 148, 420
- Phillips, Nelson
 - hermeneutics 197
 - rigor in research 521
 - strategy as practice perspective 330, 340
- philosophy, research 3–4
 - book outline 7–8
 - case studies 346, 355
 - constructionism case study 179–81
 - critical distance 364–5
 - mixed methods 107–8
 - poststructuralism 88–9
 - pragmatism 54–5, 56–9
 - recruitment of participants 481

- reflexivity 383–4
 - see also individually named paradigms e.g.*
 - positivism*
- Pillow, W. 378
- Plano Clark, V. L. 104
- Platt, J. 351, 352
- pluri-vocality 289
- Polanyi, Michael 275–6
- 'political activism-active neutrality' 363
 - see also insider/outsider relationship*
- political context
 - access for research 468
 - bodies 417–19
- political intersectionality 433, **435**
- politics of possibility 71
- polyphonic novels 150
- positionality
 - intersectionality 432–3, 453
 - reflexivity 377–8, 382, 383–90, 393–6
 - see also critical distance; researcher's role*
- positional reflexivity 385–6
 - see also reflexivity*
- positivism 17–18, 27
 - case studies 23–4, 346–8, 348, 350–2, 353, 356
 - digitalisation 26–7
 - disciplinary areas 24–6
 - globalisation 26–7
 - grounded theory 20–2
 - and interpretive social science 33, 34–5
 - and qualitative research 18–19
 - research process 19–20
- postcapitalism 71
- postcolonialism
 - business and management 122–3
 - critical issues 129–31
 - critical study of management 72–4
 - Li Min 72–4
 - methodologies 124–32, 496
 - subaltern postcolonial studies 73, 121
 - terminology and meaning 120, 121, 123
- postmodernism
 - critical distance 372
 - 'posts' 87–9
 - reflexivity 380
- post-qualitative research 97–8
- 'posts' 87–9
- poststructuralism 86–7
 - critical study of management 71
 - feminism 141–2
 - language and deconstruction 94–6
 - post-qualitative research 97–8
 - 'posts' 87–9
 - reflexivity 380
 - structure and difference 89–90
 - subject and power 91–3
- power
 - colonialism 122
 - critical realism 202–3, 205
 - critical study of management 76–7
 - cross-gender interviews 404–5
 - ethical oversight regimes 546–7, 551–3, 554–7
 - ethnomethodology 224
 - feminist methodologies 145, 150–1
 - organisational ethnography 278
 - poststructuralism 91–3
 - pragmatism 64
 - reflexivity 388–9
 - strategy as practice perspective 330
- Power, M. 548
- practical context, bodies 415, 422–6
- practitioners
 - process research 320
 - strategy as practice perspective 329, 330–40
 - writing for 542–3
 - see also researcher's role*
- pragmatism 54–6
 - in business and management 64–6
 - key concepts 59–64
 - mixed methods 108
 - philosophy 54–5, 56–9
- Prasad, Anshuman 274–5
- Pratt, Michael 520, 527, 539, 540
- prejudice, hermeneutics 192–3
- presentation of data 522
- Prins, B. **443**
- privacy, digital ethics 567–9
- probability sampling 484–5
- procedures, ethnomethodology 221–2, 223
- process research 308–11, **310**, 322–3
 - as activity **310**, 316–19, 323
 - as evolution **310**, 311–14, 322–3
 - as narrative **310**, 314–16, 323
 - as witness **310**, 319–22, 323
- product development 47–9
- Proferes, N. J. 566
- professionals *see* practitioners; researcher's role
- prostitution 81
- psychoanalytic approach 77–9
- psychological approaches 77–9, 255
- public information
 - access for research 466–7, 468, 472, 474–5
 - digital ethics 564–5, 567–9
 - writing for 534, 543–4
- publishing 518–20
 - see also academia; audiences, writing for;*
 - journals; writing up*
 - 'publish or perish' 169–70
- Pugliese, Joseph 130
- Purkayastha, B. 452
- purposive sampling 485, 486–7
- Putnam, H. 58
- qualitative positivism 346–8
 - see also positivism*
- quality criteria
 - covert research 475–6

- critical distance 371–2
- grounded theory 241–2
- key challenges 6
- organisational ethnographies 279–81
- reflexive research 390–2, **394–5**
- rigor in research 516–17, 519–21, 522–4
- quantitative research
 - ethnomethodology 225–6
 - feminism 143
 - grounded theory 235
 - process research 308
 - see also* mixed methods
- question construction, action research 291, 292–3, 294
- racial context *see* ethnic context
- radical humanism 58
- radical structuralism 58
- Ragin, Charles 353–4
- Rancière, Jacques 468
- Rantakari, A. 316
- rapport
 - critical distance 371
 - cross-gender interviews 404, 407, 408, 411, 412
- Ravasi, Davide
 - coding 527
 - data 529
 - process research 312
 - rigor in research 518, 519, 520, 525
- Rawls, J. 229
- realism
 - constructionism 174, 176
 - mixed methods 108
 - positivism 23
- Reason, P. 287
- reciprocal appropriation 161
- reciprocity
 - cross-gender interviews 411
 - indigenous research 159, 164
- recruitment for jobs 224
- recruitment of participants 480–1, 490–1
 - access 481–3, 490
 - Confucian context 505–6
 - cross-gender interviews 406–11
 - number required 487–9
 - participant selection design 111
 - reporting and justification 489–90
 - sampling techniques 483–7, **486**
- Redding, S. Gordon 126
- reflection 377, 381
 - see also* reflexivity
- reflexive distance 272–3
- reflexive ethnography 276–7
- reflexive learning 289
- reflexivity
 - access 471, 472
 - action research 289, 290–1, 297–9, **304**
 - constructionism 174, 177–9, 178–9
 - critical distance 372–3, 374
 - digital ethics 574–5
 - epistemologies 379, 382, **394–5**
 - ethical oversight regimes 554–5
 - ethnomethodology 220
 - evaluation of research 390–2, **394–5**
 - future of 392–3
 - grounded theory 240
 - intersectionality 452–3
 - methodologies 383–4, 391, **394–5**
 - organisational ethnography 276–9, 280–1
 - positionality 377–8, 383–90, 393–6
 - postcolonialism 122, 124–5, 127, 128–9, 130–1
 - process research 321–2
 - qualitative research 379–83, **394–5**
 - rigor in research 524–5
 - self- 384–7
 - terminology and meaning 378–9
 - writing up 540
- Reinharz, S. 401
- relational accountability 161–2
- relational constructionism 175, 177
- relationality, action research 290, **304**
- relational ontology, indigenous research 158
- relationships *see* social relationships
- relativism 174
- reports *see* writing up
- representation
 - intersectionality 449
 - organisational ethnography 280–1
 - recruitment of participants 484–7
 - reflexivity 379–83, 389–90
 - voice 389–90
- representational intersectionality 433–4, **435**
- research challenges 5–7
 - book outline 8–9
 - ethnomethodology 228–9
 - postcolonialism 130, 131–2
 - process research 312–14, 316, 318–19, 322
- research design approaches
 - action research 286–7
 - book outline 8
 - case studies 380, 381–2, 388
 - critical realism 206–7, **207**
 - cross-gender interviews 403–4
 - embodied approach 257–8
 - intersectionality 447–53
 - mixed methods 112–14
 - organisational ethnographies 277–9
 - organisational identity 341–2
 - process research 308–9, **310**, 311, 315, 317–18, 320–2
 - recruitment of participants 480–1
 - strategy as practice perspective 328, 332–8, 333–4
 - see also* methodologies
- research diaries 373–4, 424–5
- researcher identity 367, 385, 387–8
- researcher's location 70

researcher's role 5

- access for research 466–7, 471–2
- action research 297, 304
- book outline 8
- constructionism 178–9, 180–1
- critical distance 361, 362–3, 364–7
- critical study of management 74–7
- digital ethics 569–70, 571, 573–4
- ethics 549–50
- ethnographic sensibility 272–3
- feminist methodologies 138–9, 145, 147
- observant participation 263–4
- organisational ethnography 275
- process research 320, 321–2
- recruitment of participants 481–3
- rigor in research 528–9
- self-reflexivity 386–90
- strategy as practice perspective 331
- see also* positionality

research-sharing circles 166–7

research topics, feminism 144

research traditions 1–4, 7–8

see also individually named paradigms e.g. positivism

resource dependency theory (RDT) 211–12

resources, action research 291, 293, 294–5, 305

respectful representation 161

restroduction 209–10

retail, ethnomethodology 224

retroduction *see* abduction/retroduction

Rheinhardt, A. 520, 528

Riach, K. 393

Richards, J. 564

Richardson, S. 549

Ricoeur, P. 194–5

rights

- indigenous research 161
- for women 139

rigor in research 515–16, 530

challenges 520–6

convergences and divergences 517

data 526–30

meaning of 518–20

traditional view of 516–17

Riley, Denise 148–9

Ringrose, J. **443**

Ritzer, G. 505

Rivera, K. D. 380

Robertson, Roland 504, 505

Rodriguez, J. K. **444**, 453

Rorty, Richard 55

Rose, G. 381, 389

Roth, K. 110

Rouleau, L. 329

Rouse, M. 111

Rubin, H. J. 404, 406

Rubin, I. S. 404, 406

Ruiz Castro, M. **444**, 453Ruiz García, S. **438**

Sachs, W. 240

Said, Edward 120–1, 123, 156

Salzman, P. C. 374

'sameness-difference' 363

see also insider/outsider relationship

sampling

Confucian context 505–6

grounded theory 238

recruitment of participants 484–9, **486**, 490–1

rigor in research 526–7

see also representation

Samra-Fredericks, D. 224, 338

Sandberg, J. 8

SAP *see* strategy as practice perspective

saturation (sampling) 488, 526–7

Saunders, M. 105–6, 108

Saunders, M. N. K. 489–90

Saussure, Ferdinand de 94–5

scaffolding, action research 298

Scandinavia, action research 288

Schleiermacher, F. 186–7, 188, 190, 192

Schultze, U. 569, 570

Schultz, M. 312, 320–1

Schutz, Alfred

ethnomethodology 220

interpretive social science 34, 36–41, 42, 45, 50–1

Schwandt, T. 176

science, in qualitative research 33

see also interpretive social science; natural science; social science

scientific knowledge 37–41, **38**, 60

Scott, W. R. 266–7

search engines 572–3

second order concepts, interpretive social science 34–5, 48–9, 50

second-wave feminism 139

selective coding 21, 248

self

constructionism 178

critical study of management 75–6

feminist methodologies 150

pragmatism 62

see also researcher's role

self-reflexivity 384–90, 392

see also reflexivity

self-reporting, observant participation 265–6, 267

self-selection sampling 487

Selznik, Philip 42

semi-structured interviews 180–1

sensemaking

ethnomethodology 41–2

hermeneutics 192–4, 195–6, 198–9

sex work, constructionism case study 179–81

shadowing, feminist methodologies 146

- shamanism 506–7
- Shannon-Baker, P. 108
- Sharma, S. 109–10
- Shen, C.-Y. 496–7
- Shotter, J. 319, 320
- Showunmi, V. **444**
- significance in hermeneutics 191–2
- silences
 - cultural context 509–10
 - feminist methodologies 144–5, 146–7
 - indigenous research 130
- Simpson, A. Y. 434
- Sin, C. H. 552
- Sinclair, Amanda 420–2, 424–5, 426
- situatedness, strategy as practice perspective 339–40
- situativity, action research 290, **304**
- sketchbooks 424–5
- Sköldbberg, K. 378, 381
- Skov, A.-M. 320–1
- Sliwa, M. **440**
- Smircich, Linda 70
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai 155–7, 500
- snowball sampling 487
- social access 468, 474
 - see also* access for research
- social bonds 77–8
- social class, feminist methodologies 149
 - see also* intersectionality
- social constructionism 174–5
 - see also* constructionism
- social constructivism 174–5, 355
 - see also* constructivism
- social divisions, intersectionality 432
- social interactions
 - action research 296–7
 - ethnomethodology 220, 221–9
 - process research 316–19, 323
- socialisation, interpretive social science 43–4
- social knowledge 219, 220
- socially situated research 380
- social media
 - access 468, 472
 - data collection 474–5
 - digital ethics 563–4
- social norms, ethnomethodology 218, 219, 220, 221, 223
- social order
 - ethnomethodology 218–19
 - organisational ethnographies 276–7
- social practices, strategy as practice perspective 329–30
- social relationships
 - critical distance 362, 367–70
 - interpretive social science 37
 - pragmatism 62
- social science
 - ethical oversight regimes 548–9
 - mixed methods 112
 - reflexivity 379
 - see also* interpretive social science
- sociological imagination 276, 467
- Sonenshein, Scott 523
- sorting, grounded theory 249–50
- spirituality, indigenous research 164
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty 73, 127–8
- sponsorship, critical distance 368–9
- Srivastava, P. 387–8
- Stake, R. E. 23–4
- Stake, Robert 351–2, 354
- standardisation of research 6
- standard operating procedures, ethnomethodology 221–2
- standpoint theory 141
- Stewart, A. J. **439**
- Stewart, Kathleen 149
- Stokes, P. 163
- stories *see* narratives
- strategy as practice (SAP) perspective 328–9, 341–2
 - evolution of field 339–41
 - framework 329–30
 - methodological conversations 328–9, 330–2
 - research design approaches 328, 332–8
- stratified ontology 203–4
- Strauss, Anselm
 - case studies 349
 - grounded theory 20–2, 234, 237, 239, 241
 - rigor in research 516–17
- stream of consciousness writing 423–4
- stretching (writing up) 425–6
- structural intersectionality 432–3, **435**
- structure, poststructuralism 89–90
- students
 - PhD dissertations 540–1
 - writing for 534, 542
- subaltern postcolonial studies 73, 121
- subjective meaning, interpretive social science 37–8
- ‘subject’, poststructuralism 91–3
- Suchman, L. 222, 223
- Suddaby, Roy 520–1, 525
- ‘suspicion’, hermeneutics 194–5
- Sveningsson, S. 317
- Symon, G. 371, 372
- systems, critical realism 202–3
- ‘Tabula Geminus’ 517, 528
- Tashakkori, A. 113
- Tavistock Clinic 288
- Taylor, Steve 420, 470–1, 474
- technology
 - communication 4
 - digitalisation 26–7
 - ethnomethodology 222–3, 228, 229
 - flux and uncertainty 565
 - interpretive social science 45–7
 - organisational ethnography 274, 277–8
 - see also* digital ethics

- Teddlie, C. 113
- Tedmanson, D. **439**
- Tedmanson, Deirdre 128
- Teigen, M. 433, **437**
- temporal bracketing, process research 312, *313*
- text, hermeneutics 196–7
- Thailand, group interviews 499, 506
- ‘the actual’ (critical realism) 204
- theoretical sampling 238, 486
- theoretical sensitivity 246
- theory-building research, case studies 349, 350, 354
- ‘the real’ (critical realism) 204
- Theroux, Louis 476–7
- theses (PhDs) 540–1
- Thomas, G. 356
- Thorne, B. 551
- Tietze, S. 366
- Tilley, N. 205–6
- Tomkins, Leah 278–9, 393–6
- tools, action research 292, 293–4, 295, 296–300
- topics, feminism 144
- Townsend, K. 489–90
- Tracy, Sarah 380, 521
- Traianou, A. 549
- training, action research 294–5
- transaction cost economics (TCE) 211, 212
- ‘trans-actions’, pragmatism 63–4
- transcription, ethnomethodology 229
- transferability of research 525–6
- transformative effects, critical study of management 71–2, 74
- transformative-emancipation methods 108
- transformativity, action research 290, **304**
- transnational postcolonialism 73–4
- transparency in research 523, 530, 566
- triangulation, mixed methods 105, 106–7, 109
- trust, ethical oversight regimes 555
- truth
- academic audiences 539
 - case studies 352
 - constructionism 175–7, 181
 - critical distance 367, 374
 - critical realism 209, 212
 - cultural context 497
 - ethnography 262, 271
 - Foucauldian approach 74–5, 76
 - indigenous ontology 158
 - intersectionality 450
 - objective knowledge 38
 - philosophy 56, 60
 - reflexivity 379–83
 - rigor in research 516, 518
 - structuralism/poststructuralism 89, 90, 91, 95
- ‘twin slate’ approach 517, 528
- Twitter 563–4, 571
- United Kingdom
- ethical oversight regimes 547–8, 549, 553–7
 - feminism 143
- United States
- characterising qualitative research 3
 - ethical oversight regimes 546
 - feminism 143
 - intersectionality 142
 - mixed methods 102
- Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network (UAKN) 162
- Uttal, L. 449
- Vaara, E. 316, 331–2
- Valentine, G. **444**
- Van Maanen, John 43–4
- case studies 346
 - corporate ethnography 276
 - critical distance 365
 - ethnography 271, 277
 - organisational ethnography 273
- Vardeman-Winter, J. **445**
- variable-oriented methodologies 353
- verisimilitude 520
- Verloo, M. 433
- Verzelloni, L. 330
- video/audio recording
- action research 302–3
 - ethnomethodology 228, 229
 - observant participation 264
 - strategy as practice perspective 338
- Vincent, S. 210
- visual mapping, process research 312, *313*
- visual methods 4–5
- book outline 9
 - cultural context 499
 - intersectionality 455
- voice
- cross-gender interviews 401, 404–5
 - organisational ethnography 280–1
 - reflexivity 389–90
- Vredenburg, H. 109–10
- Wacquant, L. 260–1, 262, 265
- Wajcman, Judy 470
- walking (writing up) 425–6
- Wall, T. 163
- Walsh, I. 236
- Warner, W. Lloyd 273
- Watson, M. 109
- web *see* digital ethics
- Weber, M. 36
- Weick, K. E.
- critical distance 372
 - hermeneutics 198–9
 - process research 319, 320, 322

- Western approaches
 - across boundaries 495–6
 - colonialism 119, 121
 - and creole research 508–10
 - cultural context of research 496–500
 - ethical oversight regimes 546–7
 - Eurocentrism 126, 168–9
 - and indigenous methods 500–8
 - indigenous research 131–2, 155, 156–7, 158, 165, 166–7
 - informed consent 552, 554–5
 - intersectionality 500
- Westwood, R. 130–1
- Whetten, D. A. 309, 311
- Whittington, R. 331–2
- Wilkins, A. L. 350–1
- Williams, C. L. 404, 405
- Williams, J. 390
- Willis, P. **445**
- Wilson, S. 157–8, 160–2, 163
- Witcher, B. J. 362
- witness thinking 319–22, 323
- Wolcott, H. 533
- Wolin, R. 88
- women
 - constructionism 177–8
 - cross-gender interviews 400–11
 - reflexive research 383, 384, 392–3
 - rights 139
 - see also* feminism
- work groups *see* group research
- working hours 253–4, 256, 257, 264
- workplace
 - action research 291, 293, 295
 - corporate culture 263, 264–7
 - critical distance 366
 - ethnomethodology 221–4
 - indigenous research 129
 - knowledge-based economy 253–4, 262–5
 - participant numbers 489–90
 - part-time mothers case study 400, 402–11, **410**
 - see also* business; organisations
- Wright, T. **445**
- writing plans 534–7, 535
- writing up
 - action research 297–9
 - and bodies 415–26
 - feminism 147–50, 418–19
 - grounded theory 249–50
 - importance of 532–3, 544
 - participant justification 489–90
 - presentation 522
 - rigor in research 520–6
 - ways of writing 422–6
 - see also* audiences, writing for
- Xu, Qi 126
- Yanow, Dvora 274
- yardsticks, organisational ethnography 279–81
 - see also* quality criteria
- Yeoh, P. 110
- Yin, Robert K.
 - case studies 345–6, 347, 348, 349–50, 351–2, 355
 - positivism 23–4
- Zajicek, A. M. **436**
- Zimmer, M. 566

The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods



Sara Miller McCune founded SAGE Publishing in 1965 to support the dissemination of usable knowledge and educate a global community. SAGE publishes more than 1000 journals and over 800 new books each year, spanning a wide range of subject areas. Our growing selection of library products includes archives, data, case studies and video. SAGE remains majority owned by our founder and after her lifetime will become owned by a charitable trust that secures the company's continued independence.

Los Angeles | London | New Delhi | Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne

The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods



Methods and Challenges

Edited by
Catherine Cassell, Ann L. Cunliffe
and Gina Grandy

 **SAGE** reference

Los Angeles | London | New Delhi | Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne



Los Angeles | London | New Delhi
Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne

SAGE Publications Ltd
1 Oliver's Yard
55 City Road
London EC1Y 1SP

SAGE Publications Inc.
2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, California 91320

SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd
B 1/1 Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area
Mathura Road
New Delhi 110 044

SAGE Publications Asia-Pacific Pte Ltd
3 Church Street
#10-04 Samsung Hub
Singapore 049483

Editor: Kirsty Smy
Editorial Assistant: Colette Wilson
Production Editor: Sushant Nailwal
Copyeditor: Sunrise Setting Ltd.
Proofreader: Sunrise Setting Ltd.
Indexer: Sunrise Setting Ltd.
Marketing Manager: Emma Turner
Cover Design: Wendy Scott
Typeset by Cenveo Publisher Services
Printed in the UK

At SAGE we take sustainability seriously. Most of our products are printed in the UK using FSC papers and boards. When we print overseas we ensure sustainable papers are used as measured by the PREPS grading system. We undertake an annual audit to monitor our sustainability.

Editorial arrangement © Catherine Cassell, Ann L. Cunliffe and Gina Grandy, 2018

Chapter 01 © Catherine Cassell, Ann L. Cunliffe and Gina Grandy, 2018
Chapter 02 © Kathryn Haynes, 2018
Chapter 03 © Albert J. Mills and Jean Helms Mills, 2018
Chapter 04 © Peter Hamilton, 2018
Chapter 05 © Yiannis Gabriel, 2018
Chapter 06 © Gail T. Fairhurst and François Cooren, 2018
Chapter 07 © Bill Lee and Usman Aslam, 2018
Chapter 08 © Tracey M. Coule, 2018
Chapter 09 © Olivia Davies and Kathleen Riach, 2018
Chapter 10 © Mark Learmonth and Martyn Griffin, 2018
Chapter 11 © Peter Birch¹, 2018
Chapter 12 © Laura S. Radcliffe, 2018
Chapter 13 © Seonaidh McDonald, 2018
Chapter 14 © Nigel King and Joanna Brooks, 2018
Chapter 15 © Samantha Warren, 2018
Chapter 16 © Jenna Ward and Harriet Shortt, 2018

Chapter 17 © Katrina Pritchard and Rebecca Whiting, 2018
Chapter 18 © Rowena Viney, Jean Clarke and Joep Cornelissen, 2018
Chapter 19 © Emmanuella Plakoyiannaki and Georgia Stavraki, 2018
Chapter 20 © Rachel Morgan, Annilee M. Game and Natasha Slutskaya, 2018
Chapter 21 © Martyna Śliwa, 2018
Chapter 22 © Ann Rippin and Paula Hyde, 2018
Chapter 23 © Robert V. Kozinets, 2018
Chapter 24 © Nic Beech and Stephen Broad, 2018
Chapter 25 © Ursula F. Ott, Rudolf R. Sinkovics and Samia Ferdous Hoque, 2018
Chapter 26 © Gabrielle Durepos and Albert J. Mills, 2018
Chapter 27 © Kendra Dyanne Rivera, 2018
Chapter 28 © Noemi Sinkovics, 2018
Chapter 29 © Mats Alvesson and Jörgen Sandberg, 2018

Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of research or private study, or criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, this publication may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form, or by any means, only with the prior permission in writing of the publishers, or in the case of reprographic reproduction, in accordance with the terms of licences issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside those terms should be sent to the publishers.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017939759

British Library Cataloguing in Publication data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-5264-2927-8

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	viii
<i>List of Tables</i>	ix
<i>Notes on the Editors and Contributors</i>	x
1 Introduction: Qualitative Research in Business and Management <i>Catherine Cassell, Ann L. Cunliffe and Gina Grandy</i>	1
PART I CONTEMPORARY METHODS	15
2 Autoethnography <i>Kathryn Haynes</i>	17
3 Archival Research <i>Albert J. Mills and Jean Helms Mills</i>	32
4 Rhetoric <i>Peter Hamilton</i>	47
5 Stories and Narratives <i>Yiannis Gabriel</i>	63
6 Organizational Discourse Analysis <i>Gail T. Fairhurst and François Cooren</i>	82
7 Towards the Wholesome Interview: Technical, Social and Political Dimensions <i>Bill Lee and Usman Aslam</i>	102
8 Group Methods <i>Tracey M. Coule</i>	117
9 Sociomateriality and Qualitative Research: Method, Matter and Meaning <i>Olivia Davies and Kathleen Riach</i>	133
10 Analysing Fiction: The Example of Women's Work in Disney Animations (1937–2013) <i>Mark Learmonth and Martyn Griffin</i>	152

11	Dramaturgical Methods <i>Peter Birch[†]</i>	170
12	Capturing the Complexity of Daily Workplace Experiences Using Qualitative Diaries <i>Laura S. Radcliffe</i>	188
13	Going with the Flow: Shadowing in Organisations <i>Seonaidh McDonald</i>	205
14	Thematic Analysis in Organisational Research <i>Nigel King and Joanna Brooks</i>	219
PART II VISUAL METHODS		237
15	Photography in Qualitative Organizational Research: Conceptual, Analytical and Ethical Issues in Photo-Elicitation Inspired Methods <i>Samantha Warren</i>	239
16	Drawing <i>Jenna Ward and Harriet Shortt</i>	262
17	Analysing Web Images <i>Katrina Pritchard and Rebecca Whiting</i>	282
18	Making Meaning from Multimodality: Embodied Communication in a Business Pitch Setting <i>Rowena Viney, Jean Clarke and Joep Cornelissen</i>	298
19	Collage Visual Data: Pathways to Data Analysis <i>Emmanuella Plakoyiannaki and Georgia Stavradi</i>	313
20	Qualitative Research through Documentary Filmmaking: Questions and Possibilities <i>Rachel Morgan, Annilee M. Game and Natasha Slutskaya</i>	329
PART III METHODOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS		345
21	Aesthetics: Working With the Senses <i>Martyna Śliwa</i>	347
22	Sewing in Management and Organisation Research: The Subversive Stitch and the Politics of Cloth Revisited <i>Ann Rippin and Paula Hyde</i>	372
23	Netnography for Management and Business Research <i>Robert V. Kozinets</i>	384

24	Ethnomusicology <i>Nic Beech and Stephen Broad</i>	398
25	Advances in Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA): Application of Fuzzy Set in Business and Management Research <i>Ursula F. Ott, Rudolf R. Sinkovics and Samia Ferdous Hoque</i>	414
26	ANTi-History: An Alternative Approach to History <i>Gabrielle Durepos and Albert J. Mills</i>	431
27	‘Use Your Feelings’: Emotion as a Tool for Qualitative Research <i>Kendra Dyanne Rivera</i>	450
28	Pattern Matching in Qualitative Analysis <i>Noemi Sinkovics</i>	468
29	Metaphorizing the Research Process <i>Mats Alvesson and Jörgen Sandberg</i>	486
	<i>Index</i>	506

List of Figures

15.1	244
15.2	246
15.3	247
15.4	248
15.5	250
16.1 Drawing to record experiences	266
16.2 Recording Spatial Maps and Movements	268
16.3 Sketching existing images	269
16.4 Participant-Produced Drawings (Ward & Shortt, 2013b)	270
16.5 'How does it feel to be a Samaritan?'	273
16.6	274
18.1 Metaphorical gesture on 'bundle'	303
18.2 Metaphorical gesture on 'tiny'	304
18.3 Metaphorical gesture on 'processed in batches' and 'as and when'	305
18.4 Metaphorical gesture on 'across' and 'platform'	307
18.5 Metaphorical gesture on 'centralise'	307
19.1 Collage 1: The creative strategies of collage	316
19.2 Collage 2a: Transcription of the literal and symbolic meanings of the images posted on a collage surface	321
19.3 Collage 2b: Analysis of a collage's metaphorical relationship	324
22.1 <i>Nike Quilt</i> , Ann Rippin, 2002	375
22.2 Part of the exhibit <i>Waiting for the Warrior</i> , Ann Rippin, 2004	375
22.3 Close up showing part of <i>We Stand Surrounded by the Work of Thieves</i> , Dorothy Russell, 2014	377
22.4 <i>Cross Purposes</i> , Dorothy Russell, 2014	378
23.1 The four types of netnography	394
25.1 The use of fsQCA in management research	420
25.2 FsQCA Data sheet after Calibration in .csv	425
25.3 Selection of conditions	426
25.4 Truth table	426
25.5 Truth table	427
25.6 Truth table analysis	428
25.7 Descriptive statistics	429
28.1 Different degrees of pattern matching in qualitative (and mixed) research	471
28.2 The general logic of pattern matching and its application in explanatory case study design	473
28.3 The logic of pattern matching in bibliometric concept mapping for initial theorizing	478
28.4 Bibliometric concept map displaying 6000 concepts	479
28.5 NVivo visualisation of consumption related nodes	482
28.6 Bibliometric concept map displaying 846 concepts	482
29.1 A kaleidoscope of RP metaphors	491

List of Tables

2.1	Examples of autoethnographical approaches	25
4.1	Instances of terms rhetoric and/or reality in article titles	49
6.1	Five forms of organizational discourse analysis	88
8.1	Data table showing simple quantification of textual data	121
8.2	Spearman rho correlation matrix	122
8.3	Typology of group methods in organization and management research	129
11.1	A framework linking views about theatre and life to different elements of theatre	174
11.2	Dramaturgical methods in relation to perspectives about the relationship between life and theatre and to three elements that constitute theatre	183
13.1	Genette's (1983) theory of narratology applied to data collection methods	208
13.2	Relationships between researcher and organisation	209
13.3	Shadowing compared to other qualitative research methods	215
14.1	Different philosophical positions for research and their implications for the use of generic styles of thematic analysis	222
17.1	Key stages in analysing web images	290
19.1	Current methodologies for analysing collage visual data	319
19.2	Example of Collage 2a's story grid	322
19.3	The insights of the different processes in the analysis of collages	325
20.1	Comparison of approaches to documentary-making	335
20.2	Practical considerations in documentary filmmaking	340
25.1	Recent business papers using fsQCA (organisational, entrepreneurial and firm performance topics)	421
26.1	Summary of empirical examples that use ANTi-History	433
26.2	Benefits and limitations of the methods used with ANTi-History	446
28.1	A demonstration of flexible pattern matching through template analysis	476

Notes on the Editors and Contributors

THE EDITORS

Catherine Cassell has a longstanding interest in research methodology and the use of qualitative methods in the business, organization, and management fields. She has co-edited four books for Sage on qualitative organizational research and published numerous papers about the uses of qualitative research in the organizational psychology and management field more generally. Her latest text is *Interviews for Business and Management Students*, published by Sage in early 2015. Catherine was the founding chair of the British Academy of Management's Special Interest group in Research Methodology – a group she is still heavily involved with – and a founding member of the steering committee of the European Academy of Management's Special Interest Group in Research Methods and Research Practice. She is inaugural co-editor of *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: an International Journal*, and on the editorial boards of numerous other journals. She is a Fellow of the British Academy of Management and an Academic Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. Having previously held a number of senior academic appointments, she is currently Deputy Dean and Professor of Organizational Psychology at Leeds University Business School, UK.

Ann L. Cunliffe is Professor of Organization Studies at Fundação Getulio Vargas-EAESP, Sao Paulo, Brazil. She held positions at the Universities of Bradford and Leeds in the UK, and the Universities of New Mexico, New Hampshire, and California State University in the USA. Ann's current research lies at the intersection of organizational studies, philosophy, and communications, exploring how leaders and managers shape organizational life, selves, and action in living conversations. In particular, she is interested in examining the relationship between language and responsive and ethical ways of managing organizations. Other interests include: leadership, selfhood, qualitative research methods, embodied sensemaking, developing reflexive approaches to management research, practice, and learning. Her recent publications include the book *A Very Short, Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap Book about Management* (2014). She has published articles in *Organizational Research Methods*, *Human Relations*, *Management Learning*, *Journal of Management Studies*, and the *British Journal of Management*. She organizes the biennial Qualitative Research in Management and Organization Conference in New Mexico, USA.

Gina Grandy is Professor and RBC Women in Leadership Scholar with the Hill and Levene Schools of Business at the University of Regina located in Saskatchewan, Canada. Her research interests include leadership, gender and women's experiences at work, stigmatized work, identity, qualitative research methods, and case writing. She is the Associate Editor for the *Case Research*

Journal and serves on the international advisory board for *Management Learning* and *Gender in Management: An International Journal*. Her research has been published widely in such journals as *Human Relations*, the *Journal of Business Ethics*, the *Journal of Management Studies*, *Gender, Work and Organization*, *Organization*, *Management Learning*, *Gender in Management*, *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, and the *Case Research Journal*.

THE CONTRIBUTORS

Mats Alvesson is Professor of Business Administration at the University of Lund, Sweden, at University of Queensland Business School, Australia and at Cass Business School, London. Research interests include critical theory, gender, power, management of professional service (knowledge intensive) organizations, leadership, identity, organizational image, organizational culture and symbolism, qualitative methods and philosophy of science. Recent books include *The Stupidity Paradox* (Profile 2016, with André Spicer), *Managerial Lives* (Cambridge University Press 2016, with Stefan Sveningsson), *The Triumph of Emptiness* (Oxford University Press 2013), *Qualitative Research and Theory Development* (Sage 2011, with Dan Kärreman), *Constructing Research Questions* (Sage 2013, with J. Sandberg), *Interpreting Interviews* (Sage 2011), *Metaphors We Lead By. Understanding Leadership in the Real World* (Routledge 2011, edited with André Spicer), *Oxford Handbook of Critical Management Studies* (Oxford University Press, edited with Todd Bridgman and Hugh Willmott), *Understanding Gender and Organizations* (Sage 2009, 2nd edition with Yvonne Billing), *Reflexive Methodology* (Sage 2009, 2nd edition with Kaj Sköldbberg), and *Changing Organizational Culture* (Routledge 2015, 2nd edition with Stefan Sveningsson).

Usman Aslam is Research Fellow at the Leeds University Business School, University of Leeds, UK. He holds a PhD in Enterprise Resources Planning from Loughborough University, UK. He has previously worked in primary healthcare, managing a number of IT implementation projects. His research interests include Organisational Changes, Contemporary Research Practices, and Diversity and Inclusion. He has presented his research in leading peer-reviewed conferences such as British Academy of Management and European Conference on Information Systems.

Nic Beech is a Vice Principal of the University of Dundee, UK and oversees strategic planning, academic leadership, staffing and resources. He previously held the role of Vice Principal at the University of St Andrews, UK and is Chair of the British Academy of Management. His research interests are in change, liminality, paradox and the construction of identity in creative industries (particularly music) and health care.

Peter Birch[†] was for many years a professional actor, often appearing in leading roles on stage and screen in British theatre. He changed career direction into organizational training in 2000 and was involved in the practice and evolution of organizational theatre in the UK. He inquired into aspects of his work as theatre practitioner in organizations by undertaking a PhD at Manchester Business School, UK. He was involved in executive and MBA education for Alliance Manchester Business School and for Cranfield and Lancaster Schools of Management, all UK. His particular research and practitioner interest was in leadership as performance, on which topic he led on senior leadership development in the National Health Service in the UK.

Stephen Broad is Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Following interdisciplinary studies at the Universities of Glasgow and Oxford, he now pursues a range of research interests across historical musicology, music education and arts policy. He is co-author of *What's Going On?* (Scottish Arts Council, 2003), a study of young people's music making in Scotland that initiated the Scottish Government's £100m Youth Music Initiative.

Joanna Brooks is a Chartered Psychologist and a Lecturer in Psychology and Mental Health at the University of Manchester. The focus of her work is on applied and health-related research topics, and Jo has a particular interest in the management and experience of chronic illness conditions and end of life care. Jo's research explores networks of care and support in health and social care, and her work includes the development and use of novel and inclusive qualitative research approaches in applied settings. She is editor (with Nigel King) of *Applied Qualitative Research in Psychology* (Palgrave, 2017), and co-author (with Nigel King) of *Template Analysis for Business and Management Students* (Sage, 2017).

Jean Clarke is Professor of Entrepreneurship at Emlyon Business School, Lyon, France. Her research focuses on how entrepreneurs use linguistic and visual cues in interactions with stakeholders such as investors, customers and employees to develop legitimacy for their new ventures. She uses a variety of visual methodologies including visual ethnographic work, participant produced drawings and micro-analysis of body language and gesture. Her work has been published in journals including *Academy of Management Review*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Journal of Business Ethics* and *Journal of Management Inquiry*, among others. She is currently the Senior Editor at *Organization Studies*.

François Cooren, PhD, is a Professor at the Université de Montréal, Canada. His research focuses on organizational communication, language and social interaction, as well as communication theory. He is the author of three books: *The Organizing Property of Communication* (John Benjamins, 2000), *Action and Agency in Dialogue: Passion, Incarnation, and Ventriloquism* (John Benjamins, 2010), and *Organizational Discourse: Communication and Constitution* (Polity Press, 2015) and has also edited five volumes published by Oxford University Press, Routledge, John Benjamins and Lawrence Erlbaum. He is also the author of more than 50 articles, published in international peer-reviewed journals, as well as more than 30 book chapters. In 2010–11, he was the president of the International Communication Association (ICA) and was elected Fellow of this association in 2013. He is also the current President of the International Association for Dialogue Analysis (IADA, 2012–17), as well as a Distinguished Scholar of the National Communication Association (NCA) since 2017.

Joep Cornelissen is Professor of Corporate Communication and Management at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, the Netherlands. The main focus of his research is the role of communication and sensemaking in processes of innovation, entrepreneurship and change, but he also has an interest in questions of reasoning and theory development in organization theory. His papers have been published in *Academy of Management Review*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Organization Science* and *Organization Studies*, and he has written a general text on corporate communication, *Corporate Communication: A Guide to Theory and*

Practice (Sage), which is now in its fifth edition. He is a Council member of the Society for the Advancement of Management Studies, a former General Editor of the *Journal of Management Studies* (2006–12) and serves on the editorial boards of the *Academy of Management Journal*, *Journal of Management*, *Journal of Management Studies* and *Organization Studies*.

Tracey M. Coule is Reader in Non-profit Governance and Organization at Sheffield Business School, UK, and DBA programme leader and academic lead for the university-wide Centre for Voluntary Sector Research. Her current teaching, research and publications coalesce around two areas: the nature of organizing and managing work in non-profit organizations and the intersection between research philosophy, methodology and methods. Recent publications have featured in international journals such as *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *Public Administration* and *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*.

Olivia Davies is a PhD candidate in the Monash Business School's Department of Management, Australia. Her thesis builds on a series of focused, multispecies ethnographies to develop a more-than-human ontology of Management and Organization. Specifically, her work explores different modes of human-animal working relationships including beekeeping, animal assisted therapy, clerks of the course, and search and rescue organizations. Her broader research interests have led to a specific concern with the politics of methodological and analytical choices in qualitative organizational research.

Gabrielle Durepos, PhD is an Associate Professor at Mount Saint Vincent University, Canada. Her co-authored book: *ANTi-History: Theorizing the Past, History, and Historiography in Management and Organization Studies* (with Albert J. Mills, Information Age, 2012) addresses the need for more history in Organization Studies. She is a co-editor of both the *SAGE Encyclopaedia of Case Study Research* as well as the *SAGE Major Work on Case Study Methods in Business Research*. Her recent publications appear in *Management & Organizational History*, *Journal of Management History*, and *Critical Perspectives on International Business and Organization*. Gabrielle is a co-investigator on an SSHRC funded project focused on Reassembling Canadian Management Knowledge with an interest in dispersion, equity, identity and history. She is the Executive Director of the Atlantic Schools of Business Conference. She is currently engaged in an organizational history of a provincial museum complex in Canada.

Gail T. Fairhurst, PhD, is a Distinguished University Research Professor of Organizational Communication at the University of Cincinnati, USA. Her research and writing interests are in organizational communication, organizational discourse and leadership processes, including problem-centred leadership and framing, and organizational discourse analysis. She has published over 75 articles and chapters in communication and management journals and books. She is the author of three books, including *Discursive Leadership: In Conversation with Leadership Psychology* (Sage, 2007), *The Power of Framing: Creating the Language of Leadership* (Jossey-Bass, 2011), and *The Art of Framing: Managing the Language of Leadership* (Jossey-Bass, 1996). She is a Fellow of the International Communication Association; a Distinguished Scholar of the National Communication Association; a Fulbright Scholar; and former Associate Editor for the journal *Human Relations*.

Yiannis Gabriel is Professor of Organizational Theory at the School of Management of Bath University, UK and Visiting Professor at the University of Lund, Sweden. Earlier, he held chairs at Imperial College and Royal Holloway, University of London. Yiannis is known for his work into leadership, management learning, organizational storytelling and narratives, psycho-analytic studies of work, and the culture and politics of contemporary consumption. He is the author of nine books, numerous articles and maintains an active blog in which he discusses music, storytelling, books, cooking, pedagogy and research outside the constraints of academic publishing (www.yiannisgabriel.com/). He is currently Senior Editor of *Organization Studies*. His enduring fascination as a researcher and educator lies in what he describes as the unmanaged and unmanageable qualities of organizational life.

Annilee M. Game is a Lecturer in Organizational Behaviour and Business Ethics at the Norwich Business School, the University of East Anglia, UK. Her research interests focus on the nature and functions of affect at work, mixed methods research, and attachment and relational perspectives on individual and collective experiences of work, careers, and organizations.

Martyn Griffin is a Lecturer in organizational behaviour at Leeds University, UK.

Peter Hamilton is an Associate Professor at Durham University Business School, UK. He previously worked at Imperial College, London and the University of Central Lancashire, UK. His main research interests are in the areas of organisational rhetoric, rhetorical agency, dirty work and interactive service work. He has published in journals such as *Journal of Management Studies*, *British Journal of Industrial Relations* and *Human Resource Management and Organization*.

Kathryn Haynes is Professor of Accounting and Dean of the Faculty of Business, Law and Politics at the University of Hull, UK. Kathryn's research has been widely published in accounting and management journals and broadly relates to the role of accounting in society, with a particular interest in sustainability, accountability and social responsibility. Her work also addresses issues of gender and diversity; identity and its relationship with gender; the body and embodiment within organizations; the juxtaposition of professional and personal identities; and the conduct of the professions and professional services firms. She is particularly interested in reflexive research methodologies including autoethnography, oral history and narrative. Her research has been published in leading international journals such as *Accounting Organizations & Society*, *Accounting Auditing & Accountability Journal* and *Gender, Work & Organization* and has been funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

Samia Ferdous Hoque is Research Associate in Responsible International Business at Alliance Manchester Business School, UK. She obtained an MBA from University of Bradford, UK. Her work is at the interface of development literatures and international business, within the specific context of the Bangladesh garment sectors. She has published in *Critical Perspectives on International Business*, *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal* and *European Journal of International Management*.

Paula Hyde is Professor of Organisations and Society and Director of the Health Services Research Centre at Alliance Manchester Business School, University of Manchester, UK. Her critical-ethnographic research has included participatory research with ordinarily disenfranchised groups.

chised members of society such as older people in residential care homes. Previously, her interest in sewing and participation in quilting groups has been an activity isolated from her research.

Nigel King is Professor in Applied Psychology and Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Huddersfield, UK. He has a long-standing interest in the use of qualitative methods in ‘real world’ research, especially in community health and social care settings. His research interests include professional identities and interprofessional relations in community palliative care, psychological aspects of contact with nature and ethics in qualitative research. Nigel is well-known for his work on Template Analysis and, more recently, the development of a visual interview technique known as ‘Pictor’. He is author (with Jo Brooks) of *Template Analysis for Business and Management Students* (Sage 2017), *Interviews in Qualitative Research* (Sage 2010, with Christine Horrocks) and *Managing Innovation and Change: A Critical Guide for Organizations* (Thomson Learning 2002, with Neil Anderson).

Robert V. Kozinets is the inventor of netnography, and a social media research authority. He has authored and co-authored over 100 pieces of research, usually about the intersection of technology, media and the social. His publications include articles in top-tier journals, popular press articles, videographies, poetic research representation, a textbook, a blog and four books: *Consumer Tribes* (2007), *Netnography* (2010), *Qualitative Consumer and Marketing Research* (2013), and *Netnography: Redefined* (2015). He is the Hufschmid Chair of Strategic Public Relations and Business Communication at the University of Southern California’s Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism and Marshall School of Business, USA.

Mark Learmonth is Professor of Organization Studies at Durham University, UK, having previously worked at the Universities of Nottingham and York, UK.

Bill Lee is Professor of Accounting at the University of Sheffield, UK. He has a long-term interest in research methods and has been active in the broader community establishing groups in which the development of research methods may be discussed. In this regard, he was the inaugural secretary, subsequent convenor and chair of the British Academy of Management (BAM) ‘Research Methodology’ Special Interest Group and he was the inaugural Chair of the European Academy of Management (EURAM) ‘Research Methods and Research Practice’ Strategic Interest Group. He is an Associate Editor of *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal* and of *European Management Review*. In the latter, he is the inaugural Editor of a section ‘Methodology Matters’. He is also an editor of Sage’s Mastering Business Research Methods series.

Seonaidh McDonald is a Professor in Aberdeen Business School at Robert Gordon University, UK. Her research centres on sustainable consumption. She has investigated a wide range of sustainable practices including recycling, green energy tariffs, travel, domestic appliances, food and household goods. Her work is largely underpinned by qualitative research methods. She is interested in how research designs and researcher assumptions effect the questions researchers can ask.

Jean Helms Mills is Professor of Management in the Sobey School of Business, Nova Scotia, Canada. She is also a Visiting Senior Research Fellow at Hanken University, in Helsinki, Finland and was (2012–14) an International Professor (2.0) at Jyväskylä University’s School of

Business and Economics, Finland. Her research interests are in the areas of gender, historiography, Critical Management Studies and Critical Sensemaking. Jean's books include *Making Sense of Organizational Change* (Routledge, 2003), *Workplace Learning: A Critical Perspective* (Garamond Press, 2003), *Organizational Behaviour in Global Context* (University of Toronto Press, 2007), *Understanding Organizational Change* (Routledge, 2009) and *The Routledge Companion to Critical Management Studies* (Routledge, 2015). Jean is currently Associate Editor of *Gender, Work and Organization* (GWO), serves on the editorial board of scholarly journals, and is co-editor of *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*.

Albert J. Mills, PhD, is Professor of Management and Director of the PhD (Management) in the Sobey School of Business at Saint Mary's University in Nova Scotia, Canada. Over the years he has received several grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) to undertake archival research on the gendered histories of airline companies, including British Airways, Air Canada, Pan American Airways and, more recently, QANTAS. This work has generated numerous books, book chapters and articles. His work has been published in *Business History*, *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*, *Gender, Work & Organization*, *Group & Organization Management*, *Human Relations*, *Journal of Management Education*, *Journal of Management History*, *Management & Organizational History*, *Organization*, *Organization Studies* and many other scholarly journals. His books include *Gendering Organizational Analysis* (SAGE, 1992). He is the co-editor of *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*. *Absent Aviators: Gender Issues in Aviation* (Ashgate, 2014), and the *Oxford Handbook of Diversity in Organizations* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

Rachel Morgan is currently undertaking a scholarship funded PhD in Management Studies at Brunel University, UK. Her research interests include dirty work, identity and recognition. Rachel also has a keen interest in qualitative research methods, including ethnography, photographic representation and elicitation, and in-depth interview techniques.

Ursula F. Ott is Professor of International Business at Kingston University, UK. She earned her PhD in Economics and Social Sciences from the University of Vienna, Austria. She is an award-winning expert in international negotiations and cooperation. Before joining Kingston University in January 2016, she was at Loughborough University, the London School of Economics and the University of Vienna. She is now the Director of the Centre for Experimental Research in International Business (CERIB) and the Head of the Strategy Research Group. She has published research monographs and articles in leading journals. Her publications appear in top-tier journals such as *Journal of Management Studies*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Organization Studies*, *Sociology*, *International Business Review*, among others.

Emmanuella Plakoyiannaki is Professor of International Business at Leeds University Business School, UK. She holds a PhD in Marketing from the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK. Her research interests lie at the interface of philosophy of science, qualitative research and international marketing/business. She has published in various academic journals including the *Academy of Management Review*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Journal of World Business* and *Journal of Management Studies*, among others.

Katrina Pritchard is an Associate Professor in the School of Management at Swansea University, UK. Her research interests include the construction of identity and professional knowledge, digital media and devices at work, and diversity, with a specific focus on age and gender. Katrina is interested in a broad range of methodological issues in organizational studies including digital and visual approaches.

Laura S. Radcliffe is Lecturer in Organisational Behaviour and Director of the Masters of Research Programme at The University of Liverpool Management School, UK. Her research focuses on how people manage their roles and identities, with a particular interest in the relationship between those enacted in the work and home domains, associated gender dynamics and implications for inclusivity. To explore these issues, she draws on methodological approaches that have the ability to capture rich insights into lived, daily experiences. Her research has been published in journals such as *Human Relations* and the *Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology*.

Kathleen Riach is Associate Professor in Management at Monash Business School, Monash University, Australia. Her research focuses on the role of the body in organizational life, with a particular concern with ageing and the biological-social nexus as a site of organizational disruption. Previous research has appeared in journals including *Human Relations*, *Organization Studies*, *Sociology* and *Urban Studies*, as well as a number of edited collections. She is currently involved in a collaborative multidisciplinary project exploring menopause in the workplace and a longitudinal study of growing up and older in the financial services.

Ann Rippin is Reader in Management at the University of Bristol, UK, in the Department of Management. Her research is centred on the role of cloth in society. This covers everything from how we organise to produce cloth, to why we keep certain items of clothing, to how we form our identities through what we wear, to the importance of what she calls Hestia crafts in women's lives. Hestia crafts are to do with creating a home, after the Greek goddess of home and hearth, Hestia. Ann creates quilted and embroidered textiles about the companies she researches related to themes such as organisational excess or foundation narratives.

Kendra Dyanne Rivera, PhD is an applied organizational communication scholar who is interested in identities, emotion and wellness in organizational settings. Rivera has engaged in extensive research with everything from the US Border Patrol to community health clinics. Her research focuses on solving critical problems faced by marginalized populations and understanding how communication can both shape and reflect our emotional health and wellness. She received her PhD in Human Communication from Arizona State University, USA, and is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication at California State University, San Marcos, USA.

Jörgen Sandberg is Professor in the School of Business at the University of Queensland, Australia and Distinguished Research Environment Professor at Warwick Business School, UK. His research interests include competence and learning in organizations, sensemaking, practice-based research, theory development, qualitative research methods and philosophy of science. His work has appeared in several journals, including *Academy of Management Review*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Journal of Organization Behavior*, *Harvard Business Review* and *Organization Studies*. He has published several books,

including *Managing understanding in organizations* (with Targama, Sage, 2007), *Constructing research questions: doing interesting research* (with Alvesson, Sage, 2013), and *Skillful performance: Enacting capabilities, knowledge, competence and expertise in organizations* (with Rouleau, Langley and Tsoukas, Oxford University Press, 2017). He serves on the Editorial Boards of *Academy of Management Review*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior* and *Organization Studies*.

Harriet Shortt is Associate Professor in Organization Studies at Bristol Business School at the University of the West of England, Bristol, UK. Her research focuses on organizational space, artefacts and identity and she has an expertise in qualitative research methods including innovative visual methodologies, specifically, participant-led photography. Harriet has led a number of research projects in both public and private sector organizations that examine spatial change and the impact of work space on employees' everyday working practices. Her research has been published in journals including *Human Relations*, *Organizational Research Methods*, *Management Learning*, *Visual Studies* and the *International Journal of Work, Organisation and Emotion*. She is a member of 'inVisio' (The International Network for Visual Studies in Organization) and part of the ESRC RDI funded team that developed 'inVisio inspire', an online resource for visual researchers in business and management.

Noemi Sinkovics is Lecturer in International Business and Management at the University of Manchester, Alliance Manchester Business School, UK. Her research interests are theoretical and practical issues surrounding entrepreneurship (including international and social entrepreneurship), human rights, social value creation, global value chains and global production networks, business model design, innovation and capability development, conscious business practices, mindfulness and well-being in organizations, and research methods. She received her PhD from the University of Manchester and holds a Master's degree from the Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU-Wien), Austria.

Rudolf R. Sinkovics is Professor of International Business at the University of Manchester, Alliance Manchester Business School (AMBS), UK. He is also Visiting Professor at Lappeenranta University of Technology, Finland and currently Fox Visiting Scholar at Temple University. He received his PhD from Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU-Wien), Austria. His research covers inter-organizational governance issues, the role of ICT and research methods in international business. He currently works on an ESRC funded project on rising powers, and a Lord Alliance funded project on responsible business. Outputs have been published in journals such as *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Management International Review*, *Journal of World Business*, *International Business Review*, *Journal of International Marketing*, *International Marketing Review* and *Journal of Product Innovation Management*. He is Associate Editor of *Critical Perspectives on International Business* and also serves on the editorial boards of international business journals.

Martyna Śliwa is Professor of Management and Organisation Studies and Dean of Postgraduate Research and Education at the University of Essex, UK. Her research addresses a range of topics relevant to the employees, managers and other stakeholders of contemporary organisations, especially those operating in the international business environment. Martyna has a specific interest in bringing to the study of management and organisations

insights from other disciplines, such as history, linguistics, philosophy and sociology. Martyna's current research projects include language(s) and power in multinational corporations, transnational professional mobility, aesthetics of leadership, and organisational consequences of Brexit.

Natasha Slutskaya is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Sussex's School of Business, Management & Economics, UK. Her research interests span stigma management (especially 'dirty work' and managerial tactics for countering occupational taint) and equality, diversity and inclusion (especially social class differences and how 'class work' perpetuates inequalities in organizations).

Georgia Stavradi is Teaching Fellow at Surrey Business School, UK. She holds a PhD in Consumer Behaviour from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. Her research interests lie in the areas of visual research methods in consumer behaviour, consumers' identity projects and experiential consumption. Her research has appeared in books and academic journals as well as in international conferences.

Rowena Viney is a Research Associate at University College London Medical School, UK, where she is currently conducting research on postgraduate medical education and assessment. She obtained her PhD in Social Sciences at Loughborough University, UK. Her background is in sociolinguistics, with a particular interest in conversation analysis, and she has previously used this analytic method to study identity, gaze and touch in everyday interactions, and entrepreneurs' means of doing persuasion and meaning-making in business pitches.

Jenna Ward is Associate Professor of Work, Organisation and Emotion at the University of Leicester. Jenna's research focuses on exploring emotionality within organizations, organizing and managing. Prioritizing marginalized voices, Jenna employs and develops innovative arts-based research methods that complement her ethnographically informed research designs to observe and probe beyond the surface of both organizations and individual experiences of work, organizing and organizations. Areas of interest include emotional labour, dirty work, visual and arts-based methods, creative industries, death work and the management and organization of volunteers. Her research has been published in journals including *Human Relations*, *Social Science and Medicine* and *Environment & Planning A* and in her research monograph *The Dark Side of Emotional Labour*. Jenna is co-director of the Art of Management & Organization www.artofmanagement.org

Samantha Warren has been researching with, and writing about visual and sensory methodologies since 2001. Her passion is inspiring doctoral and early career researchers to be methodologically adventurous without sacrificing conceptual rigour. She is a founder member of the ESRC funded International Network of Visual Studies in Organizations (moodle.in-visio.org) and co-editor of the *Routledge Companion to Visual Organization*. She has undertaken projects exploring visual and aesthetic cultures of fun at work, accountants' professional identities, objects and material selves, and the role of smell in office workplaces. She is Professor in Management, Employment and Organization at Cardiff University, UK, having previously held a Chair in Management at University of Essex, UK and working at the universities of Surrey and Portsmouth, UK earlier in her career.

Rebecca Whiting is a Lecturer in the Department of Organizational Psychology at Birkbeck, University of London, UK. Her research interests include aspects of the contemporary workplace such as the discursive construction of work identities (for example, the older worker), concepts (such as age, gender and work-life boundaries), and digital technologies at work. She is also interested in the particular challenges of qualitative digital research and visual methodologies.

Introduction: Qualitative Research in Business and Management

Catherine Cassell, Ann L. Cunliffe and Gina Grandy

Welcome to *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods*. The *Handbook* aims to provide a state-of-the art overview of qualitative research methods in the business and management field. Our intention is to provide a comprehensive review of the history and traditions that underpin qualitative research within management and organisations; outline a number of contemporary methods and their relevance; and explore some of the challenges that may lie ahead for qualitative researchers. In doing so, we draw from a wide range of research traditions. While any handbook seeks to be comprehensive, it will inevitably offer a view of the field informed by a particular lens. In this case, that lens is the view of the three editors, all experienced qualitative scholars, and also the viewpoint of our contributors, who are all leading-edge, international qualitative researchers. A number of chapters are targeted at those who are relatively new to the field, while others are aimed at experienced

qualitative researchers. Some chapters cover methods that are well established, whereas others highlight new and unfolding methods or areas of investigation. We encourage you to dip in and out of the *Handbook*, following up on any traditions, methods or issues that particularly capture your interest.

Our philosophy in putting together the *Handbook* is that we have sought to recognise and celebrate the diversity of qualitative business and management research methods. The three editors all come from different traditions and we may make quite different methodological and philosophical choices in relation to our own qualitative research practices. However, we are committed to encouraging rather than problematising such diversity and believe it is important, especially for new researchers, to be aware of the range of philosophical positions, epistemologies, methodologies and methods available. As John Van Maanen noted back in 1995, 'From examples of novel practices can come individual and collective experiments and

perhaps as a result we can loosen up some of the writer's cramps that seem so prevalent in our field' (1995, p. 139). Loosening researcher's cramps by supporting diversity maintains the richness of our field and legitimates different ways of theorising, writing and enacting researcher roles. The authors in the *Handbook* are therefore researching management and/or organisations from within different disciplines (including strategy, organisational psychology, organisational communications, sociology, international business and education) using a wide range of traditions and methods. Inevitably, while acknowledging that the *Handbook* is wide in coverage, we also recognise that we will never be able to fully capture a developing and ever-changing domain.

This introductory chapter positions what follows in the *Handbook* by outlining some of the characteristics of the current state of qualitative business and management research methods and highlighting some of the debates and challenges in the field. We also introduce the different sections of the *Handbook* to offer the reader an overview of what follows. The chapters have been arranged across two thematic volumes; the first focussing on 'History and Traditions', and the second covering 'Methods and Challenges'. For ease of navigation, in this chapter we have included notes in parentheses wherever specific chapters or sections are mentioned, to indicate which companion volume ('History' or 'Methods') the chapter appears in. We invite you to join with us on this journey through what is a thriving and exciting methodological domain.

CHARACTERISING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN THE BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT FIELD

Given the diversity outlined above, how can we characterise qualitative business, management and organisational research? The

first comment we would make is that there is increasing interest in the uses and opportunities offered by research informed by qualitative methods. Qualitative research can now be found in many different areas within the 'discipline' of business, management and organisational research, including those traditionally seen as founded upon objectivity, 'facts', numbers and quantification. For example, we now see qualitative research in accounting (Boll, 2014; Lee & Humphrey, 2006); entrepreneurship (Díaz García & Welter, 2011); finance (Kaczynski et al., 2014; Salmona et al., 2015); human resource management (Townsend et al., 2016); international business (Doz, 2011; Moore, 2012); information systems (Hoeftnagel et al., 2014); marketing (Bellenger et al., 2011; Rokka & Canniford, 2016); organisational behaviour (Cassell & Symon, 2004; O'Leary & Sandberg, 2016; Symon & Cassell, 2012); organisational communication (Brummanns, 2014; Tracy et al., 2014); organisational psychology (Crozier & Cassell, 2016; Neergaard & Ulhøi, 2008; Symon & Cassell, 2006) and strategy (Anteby et al., 2014; Bettis et al., 2014). Hence qualitative research now takes place and is also published in most, if not all, of the sub-disciplines of business and management. There has also been a number of new journals focussing upon qualitative methods and issues, for example the *Journal of Organizational Ethnography* established in 2012; *Qualitative Research in Financial Markets* established in 2009; and *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management; an International Journal* established in 2006. Furthermore, there have been a number of special issues of management journals focussing upon work informed by qualitative research methods. Sometimes these special issues bring together a range of different qualitative methods to support the development of a particular research topic, for example exploring and understanding dirty work (Grandy et al., 2014) or international marketing (Andriopoulos & Slater, 2013). Other special issues focus upon the

uses of a particular type of method across a range of topics, for example case studies (Lee et al., 2007); shadowing (McDonald & Simpson, 2014); stories (Donnelly et al., 2013) or video (Jarzabkowski et al., 2014). Additionally, others are connected to qualitative research conferences, for example, QRM Conference 2012 'Embodiment, Imagination and Meaning', in *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*.

Within sub-areas of the discipline it is evident that qualitative research has developed at different rates and with different foci. However, many of the common debates around methods such as philosophical approaches, quality criteria, different tools of analysis and the role of software in data analysis have been critiqued within these different areas. For example, there have been debates about quality criteria within qualitative management research more generally (see Amis & Silk, 2008; Bluhm et al., 2011; Symon et al., 2016), as well as how it relates to specific research designs and subject areas (see Gibbert et al., 2008 on case study research; Healy & Perry 2000 on market research; and Welch et al., 2013 on international business).

There has also been differential progress towards the use and acceptance of qualitative research in various geographical communities of qualitative researchers. The use of qualitative management research in North America, Europe and the rest of the world has developed at different rates and has been informed by different traditions (Lee & Humphrey, 2006). Üsdiken (2014) notes that there is less qualitative research published in US journals than their European alternatives. Bengtsson et al. (1997) suggest that the transatlantic gap can also be explained by different methodological approaches in that European research is more frequently idiographic and processual, whereas, in contrast, US research is dominated by nomothetic approaches with their emphasis upon quantitative analysis across large samples to test hypotheses. This is still relevant today, and perhaps partially explained by cultural differences in

postgraduate research training. In the UK, Europe and Australasia it is not unusual to see such training focus around learning the craft of research, with courses on research philosophy, and qualitative and quantitative research methods to advanced levels. In the US, postgraduate training is usually discipline-based (e.g. accounting, organisational behaviour, marketing), focussing on extending disciplinary knowledge. Research philosophy is rarely covered and the positivist assumptions underpinning much of the coursework remain unchallenged. This has had not just a methodological impact but also a philosophical one. For example, critical, practice-based and discursive approaches to research are more common to European, Australasian, and Latin American business and management researchers – and US-based organisational communications researchers – because of their philosophical training. Other parts of the world also have different epistemological traditions, some of which may not be as open to qualitative research. For example, Chen (2016) discusses the challenges of teaching qualitative research in China, where, he argues, there is a lack of support for qualitative research because it is seen as subjective, biased and unrepresentative. In addressing such concerns, Chen (2016, p. 72) outlines the importance of an experiential learning strategy that draws upon a pedagogy familiar within Chinese management learning of the 'unity of knowing and doing'.

We recognise there is a potential danger in characterising traditions as US or European. We do acknowledge that there is diversity within continents and regional locations and that some caution is required. For example, Knoblauch et al. (2002, p. 2), in discussing the variety of qualitative research in Europe, highlight how scientific enterprises such as qualitative research are imprinted by cultures – not only by 'epistemic cultures', but also by their surrounding institutions, traditions and political, as well as economic contexts. They suggest that in the European context, the impact of specific national traditions of

thinking upon qualitative research can particularly be seen in countries that have passed through a Communist era, such as Poland and Slovenia.

Having noted the diversity in histories and development, we would also characterise qualitative research in this field as one where there is currently considerable methodological innovation. Indeed, as Buchanan & Bryman (2007) highlight, recent methodological innovation within the field of management and organisational research more generally has been located around qualitative and interpretive methods. Three trends are particularly worthy of mention here: first, the opportunities offered by increasingly sophisticated communication technologies; second, advances in the use of visual methods; and third, innovations in how researchers 'do' and write up qualitative research. Taking new technologies first, the development of the internet and new forms of social media have opened up a variety of online contexts available for the qualitative researcher to study (Zicker & Carter, 2010). The recent emergence of virtual ethnography, where participant observation can occur in a variety of locations such as online chat rooms, offers new opportunities for accessing the culture of online communities. Other terms used in this area include netnography and webnography. The former is a term coined by Kozinets (2010) and the latter by Purli (2007), both intended to refer to particular types of online ethnography. Other qualitative researchers have looked at the opportunities for using standard qualitative methods online, for example interviewing (Morgan & Symon, 2004; Salmons, 2015) and online focus groups (Stewart & Williams, 2005). Within the *Handbook*, we deal with some of these new methods of collecting research data in chapters such as *netnography* by Kozinets and *analysing web images* by Pritchard and Whiting. We also consider some of the distinctive challenges that such methods pose, for example in Whiting and Pritchard's chapter on *digital ethics*.

Turning now to developments in visual methods, although previously under-explored in organisation and management research (Davison et al., 2012; Meyer et al., 2013), Bell & Davison (2013) suggest that this is changing. Whereas in the past the emphasis upon the linguistic turn had led to visuality typically being neglected, this is now being re-addressed in organisation and management studies. An indication of this visual turn is the increased resources available for qualitative management and organisational researchers interested in such methods (e.g. Invisio <http://in-visio.org/>) and the special issues on visual methods that have been produced by different journals (e.g. *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal*, 2009; *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 2012; *Organizational Research Methods*, 2016). Hence it is not surprising that this *Handbook* contains a number of chapters and, indeed, a special section on visual methods. As Davison et al. (2012) suggest, visual methods particularly lean towards qualitative analysis, and within this collection we have chapters on *photographs* (Warren); *drawing* (Ward and Shortt); and *collages* (Plakoyiannaki and Stavradi). The use of video is also highlighted in the chapters on *multimodality* (Viney, Clarke and Cornelissen); and *ethnographic documentaries* (Morgan, Game & Slutskaya). A key issue in all these developments is the possibility of both established and emerging approaches and methods to offer new research insights (Gill, 2014; Jarrett & Liu, 2016; Ray & Smith, 2012).

The turn to visual methods has clearly also opened up novel ways to 'do' and present or write up qualitative research. We have also seen attention directed to other innovative ways to do and present qualitative research. Qualitative researchers have brought to light the significance of smell to workplace and research experiences (Baxter & Ritchie, 2013; Riach & Warren, 2015), the body as a critical aspect informing the researcher's experiences (Mavin & Grandy, 2016a,

2016b), as well as that which informs the everyday experiences of leadership (Ladkin, 2014; Sinclair, 2005, 2011, 2014), and the role of emotion in research (Rivera & Tracy, 2014). Rivera & Tracy's (2014) qualitative research on the experiences of border patrol officers is a particularly poignant piece which draws from vignettes, participant observation, shadowing and interviews to sharply bring to light how emotion does inform our experiences of work and research. Their piece vividly surfaces what it *feels* like to do such 'dirty work', something we suggest can only emerge through an innovative approach to doing and writing-up qualitative research. Overall, rare and rich insights are afforded through reflexive, embodied, emotive and aesthetically driven qualitative research.

In a related vein, yet at the same time in ways moving us away from methods more generally, an increased interest in qualitative management research draws attention to the role of the individual researcher. Within the methodological literature this has been evidenced by the increased focus upon researcher positioning and reflexive research practice (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013; Hibbert et al., 2014). There is a burgeoning literature within organisation studies about the role and contribution of researcher reflexivity (e.g. Cunliffe, 2003; Johnson & Duberley, 2003; Weick, 2002). Given the closeness of the researcher to the research participants within qualitative research, this is particularly pertinent for qualitative researchers. For Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009, p. 9), reflexivity 'means that serious attention is paid to the way different kinds of linguistic, social, political and theoretical elements are woven together in the process of knowledge development, during which empirical material is constructed, interpreted and written'. The benefits of researcher reflexivity are seen to be numerous, ranging from enabling us to think about our own thinking (Haynes, 2012) and our own bodies (Mavin & Grandy, 2016a, 2016b; Sinclair, 2014); questioning the taken-for-granted in our own and others beliefs (Ripamonti et al.,

2016); emphasising the inclusion of the researcher (Hardy et al., 2001); and creating 'more imaginative, more nuanced and richer interpretations' (Cunliffe, 2011, p. 409) from our data. Reflexive thinking also enables the opening up of new possibilities with different types of research questions (Sandberg & Alvesson, 2010), new ways of theoretical thinking (Shotter, 2008) and new ways of engaging with participants and the outcomes of such engagements (Corlett, 2013; Holton & Grandy, 2016). Moreover, within qualitative organisational research, reflexivity is moving towards being seen as standard practice. Indeed, authors have suggested it should be a regular part of research methods training (e.g. Symon & Cassell, 2004). Considerations of reflexivity within the literature have expanded beyond the purely methodological; as Weick (2002, p. 893) suggests, theory construction in the current millennium can be seen as an exercise in 'disciplined reflexivity'.

In summary, we would portray the field of qualitative business and management research methods as characterised by diversity in epistemologies and methods, with novel methodologies and approaches being developed all the time. We have suggested that there is now a more nuanced approach to the role of the researcher and to reflexivity, and more generally an exciting future ahead. Within the *Handbook* we have captured some of that diversity and the chapters offer thought-provoking explorations to those interested in using these methods.

KEY CHALLENGES

Any academic domain faces challenges and critique, and here we outline some of the challenges currently experienced by qualitative management researchers. The increased prevalence of qualitative research has resulted in the emergence of a number of debates including the status and quality of qualitative business and management research. Recent

commentaries have focussed upon the extent to which qualitative research has made it into the mainstream (e.g. Bluhm et al., 2011; Üsdiken, 2014) and the increased acceptance (or not) of qualitative research within top journals in the field. Some argue that considerable progress has been made. However, this advancement is not universally recognised by qualitative researchers. While Üsdiken's (2014) review of 40 years of management publications argues that there is an increase in the amount of qualitative research published in those journals, we suggest that an increase of 14.3 per cent over a 30 year period is hardly a radical change.

These debates inevitably link in to discussions of quality in qualitative research and how quality is defined (e.g. Symon et al., 2016; Tracy, 2010; Welch et al., 2013). This has long been a problem within the evaluation of qualitative management research in that criteria associated with a positivist paradigm informed by quantitative approaches have been inappropriately applied to qualitative research (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Johnson et al., 2006). This has led to various authors creating alternative sets of criteria for qualitative research and some arguing that without the expansion of such evaluation criteria, some of the work produced by qualitative management researchers may be undermined (Amis & Silk, 2008). Organisation studies scholars argue that the criteria for evaluating qualitative management research need to be contingent upon the philosophical tradition within which such research is conducted (Cunliffe, 2011; Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993; Johnson et al. 2006), the implication being that the different traditions outlined in the first section of the *Handbook* would draw upon different evaluation criteria. To supplement this, Tracy (2010) identifies eight flexible 'big tent' criteria – a worthy topic, rich rigour, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics and meaningful coherence – markers of goodness for qualitative research. She argues that while criteria are contextual

and not value free, they provide important heuristics that reflect the core values of a particular craft. The use of criteria appropriate to the philosophical and methodological positioning of the research would lead to a more level playing field for qualitative business and management research.

Such criteriological debates link into concerns about the move towards increasing standardisation within qualitative management research (Cassell, 2016). In outlining sources of standardisation, Cassell cites the recommendations made by different journal editors about what qualitative researchers need to do in order to get their papers published in the top international outlets. Such prescriptive types of editorials and articles are critiqued extensively by Symon et al. (2016, p. 1), who argue that they serve to produce '(inappropriate) homogeneous evaluation criteria' with the consequence of 'marginalising alternative perspectives and disciplining individual qualitative researchers into particular normative practices'. A concern with a move to formulaic treatment of research questions has been critiqued more generally elsewhere within our field (e.g. Alvesson & Gabriel, 2013), but Cornelissen (2016) notes that there is also a move towards what he describes as factor analytic approaches to qualitative research, where data analysis strategies mimic the principles of quantitative analysis. Our concern is that this potentially serves to limit creativity within qualitative research – a state, as Van Mannen (1995, p. 139) provocatively observed, of 'technocratic unimaginativeness' where 'our generalizations often display a mind-numbing banality and an inexplicable readiness to reduce the field to a set of unexamined, turgid, hypothetical thrusts designed to render organizations systematic and organization theory safe for science'. As noted earlier, we see diversity as something to celebrate, rather than to be constrained.

We would also be remiss not to acknowledge the challenges that qualitative researchers can confront in trying to balance the need to stay within what can be restrictive page

limits with the inclusion of enough ‘raw’ data to present a persuasive account for their reviewers. Pratt (2009) suggests that qualitative researchers include both ‘power’ and ‘proof’ quotes as a means to persuade the reviewers of the rigour of the findings. This, however, can often be challenging within page limits historically designed for research that employs quantitative methods.

Institutional requirements can also create a challenge. Pressure to publish a defined number of articles in top (often mainstream) journals within a specified time frame has an impact on a researcher’s ability to engage in more longitudinal and ethnographic studies – good qualitative research takes time! Negotiating institutional review boards and ethics committees when doing snowball sampling (confidentiality issues), ethnography (does everyone that the researcher encounters need to sign a consent form?), and getting consent when doing participatory action research (see Burns et al., 2014) requires persistence, but is often rewarded by rich, in-depth insights into organisational life.

Such debates are characteristic of lively methodological engagement. We would argue that the production of a *Handbook* to highlight, critique and review the contribution of qualitative research to our field is somewhat timely. Clearly, considerable progress has been made in this area, but there is also room for so much more. We would hope that the *Handbook*, through its coverage of these different debates within a methodological context, enables us to progress these debates in a constructive way and draw attention to the many opportunities that qualitative research methods offer to our diverse research field.

INTRODUCING THE *HANDBOOK*

Putting together the content of the *Handbook* felt like an important responsibility in that it could be interpreted as the editorial team defining the content of the field, though, as

noted earlier, as shaped by our own perspective and position within it. Feedback from the reviewers of the collection and our international advisory board helped to develop the content. In the end, we found out that the challenges in putting the *Handbook* together very much mirrored the challenges facing the discipline and practice of qualitative management research. We wanted the content to reflect the diversity of the methodological field, including epistemologies, methods and research designs. Hence the reader will find chapters from a wide array of philosophical stances to qualitative management research ranging from *positivist qualitative research* (Su), *interpretative science* (Gephart) and *constructionism* (Grandy), to analytic techniques informed by post-structuralism such as *discourse* (Fairhurst and Cooren) and *sociomateriality* (Riach), to those informed by post-positivism, for example *fuzzy set qualitative content analysis* (Sinkovics et al.). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the challenges outlined in the previous sections are all addressed within different contributions of the *Handbook*, so we have chapters on publishing qualitative research aimed at beginners to the field, *writing for different audiences* (Myers), together with the more challenging questions and debates about *conducting and publishing rigorous qualitative research* (Rheinhardt et al.).

The book starts by addressing some of the wide variety of traditions within which qualitative research is conducted. The aim here is to provide an overview of those different traditions and we cover long-established philosophical approaches such as *positivism* (Su); *interpretivism* (Gephart); *pragmatism* (Simpson); *hermeneutics* (Tomkins & Eatough); *critical realism* (Vincent & Mahoney) and *ethnomethodology* (Whittle); alongside more recent approaches such as *critical management studies* (Pritchard et al.); *poststructuralism* (Benozzo); *mixed methods* (Molina-Azurin); *feminism* (Harding); *constructionism* (Grandy); *postcolonialism* (Weston & Imas) and *indigenous methodologies* (Schneider & Kayseas). Each of those

chapters provides an overview of the philosophical approach, together with summaries of key debates and the implications for qualitative business and management research.

The next section of the book focusses upon research designs within qualitative business and management research. Again, our aim here was to represent the key approaches used within the field with a particular focus on what perhaps can be seen as traditional research design approaches within qualitative research. We start with chapters on *field research* (Michel) and *workplace ethnographies* (Ciuk et al.), which help characterise some of the first forays into qualitative research by management researchers. Holton's chapter on *grounded theorizing* provides needed clarity to the debate on grounded theory as a design in qualitative research. She distinguishes between grounded theory as a general methodology in its own right and the inductive approach typically employed by qualitative researchers often referred to as grounded theory. She advocates for the use of grounded theorising, not grounded theory, to depict that which is employed by qualitative researchers. There are also chapters on *action research* (Scaratti et al.) and *case studies* (Piekkari & Welch), both of which have long traditions in qualitative management research. Chapters on *process* (Fachin & Langley) and *practice designs* (Abdallah et al.) conclude this section.

As noted earlier, there is an increased emphasis within qualitative business and management research about the role of the researcher in the research process. Within lies a recognition that we are part of the organisational world that we study and therefore this will impact the methods, process and outcomes of our research in a variety of different ways. Section Three includes a number of chapters that focus explicitly on the researcher's role. Within this section considerable attention is paid to reflexivity and the implications in practice of taking a reflexive stance. The key issues and challenges are outlined in reflexivity and positionality (Corlett & Mavin) and

the problematic issue of how the researcher achieves some critical distance, if indeed this is possible, is critiqued (Hayward & Cassell). Fahad et al. provide an informative insider account of the reflexive challenges faced by men interviewing women, while Sinclair & Ladkin provide an interesting account of the possibilities that come for the researcher when they acknowledge and embrace writing from the body as a qualitative researcher. Rodriguez's chapter on *intersectionality and qualitative research* brings to light how gender and other 'markers' of difference are re-created and sustained within systems of power and inequality and how qualitative research opportunities and challenges arise through this methodological framework. Both Sinclair & Ladkin and Rodriguez offer insights into the researched and the researcher. Our editorial aim in this section is to problematise the role of the qualitative researcher and explore a range of different dimensions of the lived experience of qualitative research.

Volume one concludes with a section on some of the challenges associated with conducting qualitative research. Taylor & Land discuss the key issue of *access and departure*, something that faces every qualitative researcher and is increasingly discussed within the qualitative literature. Publication is an often-cited challenge for the qualitative management researcher and here we have two different insightful approaches to the topic. Whereas Myers offers *writing for different audiences* as a resource for the novice qualitative researcher, Reinhardt et al. offer suggestions for how we understand conducting and *publishing rigorous qualitative research*, recognising that rigour may be defined in a variety of ways by different qualitative researchers. The increasing globalisation of management research offers both opportunities and challenges and these are addressed by Gobo in his chapter about globalisation and *qualitative research across boundaries*. The distinctive challenges of ethics in international research are also explored by Bell & Kothiyal. The increased impact of

globalisation and the use of novel communication technologies offers a series of new ethical challenges, as critiqued by Whiting & Pritchard in their chapter on *digital ethics*. The chapter in this section by Saunders & Townsend offers discussion on an issue of key importance for qualitative researchers: *choosing research participants*.

Volume two of the *Handbook* turns to consider methods more specifically. Given the extensive variety in methods as noted earlier, the volume outlines both the traditional approaches with a long history, such as interviews and those that are relatively new. Where well-used approaches are discussed, the intention is to provide the reader a new angle or perspective on those methods, for example Lee & Aslam discuss the nature of the *wholesome interview* and Learmonth & Griffin offer us a new way of understanding images of women at work through *analysing fiction* in Disney films. Section 5, on contemporary methods, includes methods of data collection and analysis, although in some chapters the method encapsulates both, as can be seen in the chapters on *autoethnography* (Haynes) and *stories and narrative* (Gabriel). Novel methods often underemployed by qualitative researchers in business and management are also covered, for example *diary studies* (Radcliffe), *shadowing* (McDonald) and *archival analysis* (Mills and Helms Mills). Contemporary theoretical approaches such as *sociomateriality* (Davies & Riach) and *dramaturgical methods* (Birch) are showcased alongside methods that have had a long history within the field, for example *group methods* (Coule). Other chapters in this section focus upon alternative ways of analysing language, for example *rhetoric* (Hamilton), *discourse* (Fairhurst & Cooren) and *stories and narrative* (Gabriel). The section concludes with a new look at one of the longstanding ways of analysing qualitative data, *thematic analysis* (King & Brooks).

As noted earlier, there has been an increased usage within business, organisation and management fields of visual methods. In recognising these developments, we decided to devote

a full section within the *Handbook* to these approaches, though we recognise that the visual is also considered in other places within the *Handbook*. The chapters in Section 6 illustrate the potential of different visual methods such as *photographs* (Warren), *drawing* (Ward & Shortt) and *collages* (Plakoyiannaki & Stavrakaki). The possibilities for videos in qualitative research are also on the rise. In a particularly unique approach, Morgan et al. discuss how research participants can create their own videos through *ethnographic documentaries*. Analysis of visual images is more directly addressed in Viney et al.'s chapter on *semiotics and symbols* and Pritchard and Whiting's chapter on *analysing web images*. Our prediction is that as time progresses there will be even more methodological developments within the area of visual methods of qualitative research.

The final section of the *Handbook* covers methodological developments. This section focusses upon contemporary methods that have had little airing in the qualitative business and management field. For example, Rippin & Hyde produce an intriguing account of the use of *sewing* as a critical research method technique, whereas Beech & Broad introduce us to the concept of *ethnomusicality* and what that means for research methods. Adopting an innovative approach in presenting methodological developments, Rivera threads insights from Yoda (*Star Wars*) throughout her thorough account of the important topic of *emotion and qualitative research*, while Durepos & Mills outline *ANTI-history* as an alternative approach to historiography. Using the internet for research into ethnographic communities is the focus of Kozinets' chapter on *netnography*. Alvesson & Sandberg critique the metaphors traditionally used for research design and through the use of different metaphors offer some alternative conceptualisations of the research process. This section also highlights some of the developments at the more quantitative end of qualitative data analysis such as *pattern-matching* (Sinkovics, N.) and *fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis* (Ott et al.).

CONCLUSIONS

In putting together this *Handbook* we have sought to capture the essence of what is an ever-evolving, exciting and diverse field for business and management research. The chapters weave in and out of philosophical, conceptual and empirical considerations relevant for those already engaged in qualitative research, but also relevant for those new to qualitative research and those simply curious about the possibilities afforded through qualitative research in business and management. The chapters also incorporate extensive reference lists, which can serve as a resource for those who want to delve deeper into a particular topic or study. Not only does the content reflect considerable breadth and depth in topics as it relates to qualitative research, the contributors provide perspectives from across the world, spanning such countries as Italy, Canada, the United States, the UK, India, Brazil, Greece and New Zealand, amongst others.

Putting together this *Handbook* has been a valuable learning experience for us as well. We continue to be intrigued by the different and complementary approaches that emerge across the chapters and sections of the *Handbook* and excited by the prospects they offer in terms of our own development as researchers and the insights they offer for organisation scholars and practitioners. We sincerely hope that this collection serves as a valuable resource and stimulates new paths for qualitative researchers in business and management to explore. We encourage you to read on to see what might inspire you for your next study.

REFERENCES

- Alvesson, M. & Gabriel, Y. 2013. Beyond formulaic research: In praise of greater diversity in organizational research and publications. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 12(2): 245–63.
- Amis, J.M. & Silk, M.L. 2008. The philosophy and politics of quality in qualitative organizational research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 11(3): 456–80.
- Andriopoulos, C. & Slater, S. 2013. Exploring the landscape of qualitative research in international marketing: Two decades of *IMR*. *International Marketing Review*, 30(4): 384–412.
- Anteby, M., Lifshitz, H. & Tushman, M. 2014. *Using qualitative research for "how" questions*. Retrieved from <http://strategicmanagement.net/pdfs/qualitative-research-in-strategic-management.pdf> (accessed on 16 August, 2017).
- Baxter, L.F. & Ritchie, J.M. 2013. The sense of smell in researching a bakery. *International Journal of Work Organisation and Emotion*, 5(4): 369–83.
- Bell, E. & Davison, J. 2013. Visual management studies: Empirical and theoretical approaches. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15(2): 167–84.
- Bellenger, K.L., Bernhardt, J.L. & Goldstucker, D.N. 2011. *Qualitative research in marketing*. Chicago: American Marketing Association.
- Bengtsson, L., Elg, U. & Lind, J. 1997. Bridging the transatlantic publishing gap: How North American reviewers evaluate European idiographic research. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 13(4): 473–92.
- Bettis, R.A., Gambardella, A., Helfat, C. & Mitchell, W. 2014. Theory in strategic management. *Strategic Management Journal*, 35(10): 1411–13.
- Bluhm, D.J., Harman, W., Lee, T.W. & Mitchell, T.R. 2011. Qualitative research in management: A decade of progress. *Journal of Management Studies*, 48(8): 1866–91.
- Boll, K. 2014. Shady car dealings and taxing work practices: An ethnography of a tax audit process. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 39(1): 1–19.
- Brummans, B. 2014. Pathways to mindful qualitative organizational communication research. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 28(3): 440–47.

- Buchanan, D.A. & Bryman, A. 2007. Contextualising methods choice in organizational research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 10(3): 483–501.
- Burns, D., Hyde, P., Killeth, A., Poland, F. & Gray, R. 2014. Participatory organizational research: Examining voice in the co-production of knowledge. *British Journal of Management*, 25(1): 133–44.
- Cassell, C.M. 2016. European qualitative research: A celebration of diversity and a cautionary tale. *European Management Journal*, 34(5): 453–56.
- Cassell, C.M. & Symon, G. 2004. *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research*. London: Sage.
- Chen, Z. 2016. Challenges and strategies of teaching qualitative research in China. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 22(2): 72–86.
- Corlett S. 2013. Participant learning in and through research as reflexive dialogue: Being 'struck' and the effects of recall. *Management Learning*, 44(5): 453–69.
- Cornelissen, J.P. 2016. Preserving theoretical divergence in management research: Why the explanatory potential of qualitative research should be harnessed rather than suppressed. *Journal of Management Studies*, 54(3): 368–83.
- Crozier, S. & Cassell, C.M. 2016. Methodological considerations in the use of audio diaries in work psychology: Adding to the qualitative toolkit. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 89(2): 396–419.
- Cunliffe, A.L. 2003. Reflexive inquiry in organization research: Questions and possibilities. *Human Relations*, 56(8): 983–1003.
- Cunliffe, A.L. 2011. Crafting qualitative research: Morgan and Smircich 30 years on. *Organizational Research Methods*, 14(4): 647–73.
- Cunliffe, A.L. & Karunanayake, G. 2013. Working within hyphen-spaces in ethnographic research: Implications for research identities and practice. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(3): 364–92.
- Davison, J., Mclean, C. & Warren, S. 2012. Exploring the visual in organizations and management. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 7(1): 5–15.
- Díaz Garcia, M.C. & Welter, F. 2011. Gender identities and practices: Interpreting women entrepreneurs' narratives. *International Small Business Journal*, 31(4): 384–404.
- Donnelly, P.F., Gabriel, Y. & Özkazanç-Pan, B. 2013. Untold stories of the field and beyond: Narrating the chaos. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 8(1): 4–15.
- Doz, Y. 2011. Qualitative research for international business. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 42(5): 582–90.
- Easterby-Smith, M., Golden-Biddle, K. & Locke, K. 2008. Working with pluralism: Determining quality in qualitative research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 11(3): 419–29.
- Gibbert, M., Ruigrok, W. & Wicki, B. 2008. What passes for a rigorous case study? *Strategic Management Journal*, 29(13): 1469–74.
- Gill, M.J. 2014. The possibilities of phenomenology for organizational research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 17(2): 118–37.
- Golden-Biddle, K. & Locke, K. 1993. Appealing work: An investigation of how ethnographic texts convince. *Organization Science*, 4(4): 595–617.
- Grandy, G., Mavin, S. & Simpson, R. 2014. Doing dirty research using qualitative methodologies: Lessons from stigmatized occupations. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 9(3): 174–82.
- Hardy, C., Phillips, N. & Clegg, S. 2001 Reflexivity in organization and management theory: A study of the production of the research 'subject'. *Human Relations*, 54(5): 531–60.
- Haynes, K. (2012) Reflexivity. In C.M. Cassell & G. Symon, *Qualitative methods in organizational research: Core methods and current challenges*. London: Sage.
- Healy, M. & Perry, C. 2000. Comprehensive criteria to judge validity and reliability of qualitative research within the realism paradigm. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 3(3): 118–26.
- Hibbert, P., Sillince, J., Diefenbach, T. & Cunliffe, A.L. 2014. Relationally reflexive practice: A generative approach to theory development in qualitative research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 17(3): 278–98.

- Hoefnagel, R., Oerlemans, L. & Goedee, J. 2014. How anchoring and adjusting influence citizens' acceptance of video-mediated crime reporting: A narrative approach. *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 23(4): 305–22.
- Holton, J. & Grandy, G. 2016. Voiced inner dialogue as relational reflection-on-action: The case of middle managers in healthcare. *Management Learning*, 47(4): 369–90.
- Jarrett, M. & Liu, F. 2016. 'Zooming with': A participatory approach to the use of video ethnography in organizational studies. *Organizational Research Methods*, published online before print 11 July, 2016, doi: 10.1177/1094428116656238.
- Jarzabkowski P., LeBaron C., Phillips K. & Pratt M. 2014. Call for papers: Video-based research methods. *Organizational Research Methods*, 17(1): 3–4.
- Johnson, P. & Duberley, J. 2003. Reflexivity in management research. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(5): 1279–303.
- Johnson, P., Buehring, A., Cassell, C.M. & Symon, G. 2006. Evaluating qualitative management research: Towards a contingent criteriology. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 8(3): 131–56.
- Kaczynski, D., Salmona, M. & Smith, T. 2014. Qualitative research in finance. *Australian Journal of Management*, 39(1): 127–35.
- Knoblauch, H., Flick, U. & Maeder, C. (2005). Qualitative methods in Europe: The variety of social research. art 34., available at *Forum: Qualitative social research*, 6(3). Retrieved from: www.qualitative-research.net/fqs-texte/3-05/05-3-34-e.htm (11 May, 2016).
- Kozinets, R.V. 2010. *Netnography: Doing ethnographic research online*. London: Sage.
- Ladkin, D. 2014. 'In through the nose, out through the mouth': How conscious breathing can help mere mortals cope with the difficulties of leading. In Ladkin D. & Taylor S. (eds) *The physicality of leadership: Gesture, entanglement, taboo, possibilities. Monographs in Leadership and Management*, pp. 221–37. Bingley: Emerald Publishing Group.
- Lee, B. & Humphrey, C. 2006. More than a numbers game: Qualitative research in accounting. *Management Decision*, 44(2): 180–97.
- Lee, B., Collier, P.M. & Cullen, J. 2007. Reflection on the use of case studies in the accounting, management and organization disciplines. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 2(3): 169–78.
- Mavin, S. & Grandy, G. 2016a. A theory of abject appearance: Women elite leaders' intra-gender 'management' of bodies and appearance. *Human Relations*, 69(5): 1095–120.
- Mavin, S. & Grandy, G. 2016b Women elite leaders doing respectable business femininity: How privilege is conferred, contested and defended through the body. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 23(4): 379–96.
- McDonald, S. & Simpson, B. 2014. Shadowing research in organizations: The methodological debates. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 9(1): 3–20.
- Meyer, R.E., Höllerer, M.A., Jancsary, D. & van Leeuwen, T.J. 2013. The visual dimension of organising, organization, and organization research: Core ideas, current developments and promising avenues. *Academy of Management Annals*, 7(1): 489–555.
- Moore, F. 2012. Identity, knowledge and strategy in the UK subsidiary of an Anglo-German automobile manufacturer. *International Business Review*, 21(2): 281–92.
- Morgan, S. & Symon, G. 2004. Electronic interviews in organizational research. In C.M. Cassell & G. Symon (eds) *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research*, pp. 23–33. London: Sage.
- Neergaard, H. & Ulhøi, J.P. 2008. *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- O'Leary, J. & Sandberg, J. 2016. Managers' practice of managing diversity revealed: A practice-theoretical account. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 38(4): 512–36.
- Pratt M. 2009. From the editors. For the lack of a boilerplate: Tips on writing up (and reviewing) qualitative research. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52(5): 856–62.
- Purli, A. 2007. The web of insights: The art and practice of webnography. *International Journal of Market Research*, 49(3): 387–408.
- Ray, J.L. & Smith, A.D. 2012. Using photographs to research organizations: Evidence, considerations, and application in a field study. *Organizational Research Methods*, 15(2): 288–315.

- Riach, K. & Warren, S. 2015. Smell organization: Bodies and corporeal porosity in office work. *Human Relations*, 68(5): 789–809.
- Ripamonti, S., Galuppo, L., Gorli, M., Scaratti, G. & Cunliffe, A.L. 2016. Pushing action research towards reflexive practice. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 25(1): 55–68.
- Rivera, K.D. & Tracy, S.J. 2014. Embodying emotional dirty work: A messy text of patrolling the border. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 9(3): 201–22.
- Rokka, J. & Canniford, R. 2016. Heterotopian selfies: How social media destabilizes brand assemblages. *European Journal of Marketing*, 50(9/10): 1789–813.
- Salmona, M., Kaczynski, D. & Smith, T. 2015. Qualitative theory in finance: Theory into practice. *Australian Journal of Management*, 40(3): 403–13.
- Salmons, J. 2015. *Qualitative online interviews: Strategies, design, and skills*. London: Sage (2nd edition).
- Sandberg, J. & Alvesson, M. 2010. Ways of constructing research questions: Gap-spotting or problematization? *Organization*, 18(1): 23–44.
- Shotter, J. 2008. Dialogism and polyphony in organizing theorizing in organization studies: Action guiding anticipations and the continuous creation of novelty. *Organization Studies*, 29(4): 501–24.
- Sinclair, A. 2005. Body and management pedagogy. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 12(1): 89–104.
- Sinclair, A. 2011. Leading with body. In E. Jeanes, D. Knights & P. Martin (eds) *Handbook of gender, work and organization*, pp. 117–30. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- Sinclair, A. 2014. On knees, breasts and being fully human in leadership. In S. Taylor & D. Ladkin (eds) *The physicality of leadership: Gesture, entanglement, taboo, possibilities*. Monographs in Leadership and Management, pp.177–197. Bingley: Emerald Publishing Group.
- Stewart K. & Williams, M. 2005. Researching online populations: The use of online focus groups for social research. *Qualitative Research*, 5(4): 385–416.
- Symon, G. & Cassell, C.M. 2004. Promoting new research practices in organizational research. In C.M. Cassell & G. Symon (eds) *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research*. London: Sage, pp. 1–10.
- Symon, G. & Cassell, C.M. 2006. Neglected perspectives in work and organizational psychology. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 79(3): 307–14.
- Symon, G. and Cassell, C.M. 2012. *Qualitative methods in organizational research: Core methods and current challenges*. London: Sage.
- Symon, G., Cassell, C.M. & Johnson, P. 2016. Evaluative practices in qualitative management research: A critical review. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, published online before print 13 September, 2016. doi: 10.1111/ijmr.12120.
- Townsend, K., Loudoun, R. & Lewin, D. 2016. *The Edward Elgar handbook of qualitative research methods on HRM: Innovative techniques*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Tracy, S.J. 2010. Qualitative quality: Eight ‘big-tent’ criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10): 837–51.
- Tracy, S.J., Eger, E.K., Huffman, T.P., Malvini Redden, S. & Scarduzio, J.A. 2014. Narrating the backstage of qualitative research in organizations: A synthesis. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 28(3): 423–32.
- Üsdiken, B. 2014. Centres and peripheries: Research styles and publication patterns in ‘top’ U.S. journals and their European alternatives, 1960–2010. *Journal of Management Studies*, 51(5): 764–89.
- Van Maanen, J. (1995). Style as theory. *Organization Science*, 6(1): 133–43.
- Weick, K.E. 2002. Essai: Real-time reflexivity: Prods to reflection. *Organization Studies*, 23(6): 893–98.
- Welch, C., Plakoyiannaki, E., Piekkari, R. & Paavilainen-Mäntymäki, E. 2013. Legitimizing diverse uses for qualitative research: A rhetorical analysis of two management journals. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15(2): 245–64.
- Zicker, M.J. & Carter, N.T. 2010. Reconnecting with the spirit of workplace ethnography: A historical review. *Organizational Research Methods*, 13(2): 304–19.

This page intentionally left blank

PART I

Contemporary Methods



This page intentionally left blank

Autoethnography

Kathryn Haynes

INTRODUCTION

Autoethnography is a methodological approach to research and a genre of writing where the researcher is the focus of reflexive inquiry. However, the researcher's self is inevitably experienced and positioned within a social context, hence the autoethnography also addresses to varying degrees the wider social, cultural and political environs with which the researcher interacts. Autoethnography therefore enables the researcher themselves to form a subject of lived inquiry within a particular social context.

This chapter first addresses the definition and conceptualisation of autoethnography. Second, it evaluates different forms of autoethnography, illustrating with examples to demonstrate their approach. Third, the chapter considers the interaction of these multiple forms of autoethnography and their different epistemological approaches. Fourth, a section gives some examples of the uses

of autoethnography, before a fifth section discusses the challenges within autoethnography, such as ethical dilemmas, representation, validity and truth, and the application of reflexivity to autoethnography. Finally, the chapter outlines the future possibilities for autoethnography in qualitative research.

DEFINING AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

As the way that inquiry can be carried out can take a number of forms, there is not necessarily an agreed and simple definition of autoethnography, as seen from these multiple perspectives from proponents of the genre. For example,

Autoethnography refers to writing about the personal and its relationship to culture. It is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness (Ellis, 2004, p. 37).

Autoethnography is 'cultural analysis through personal narrative' (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014, p. 17).

Autoethnography is defined as a form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context. It is both a method and a text, as in the case of ethnography (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p. 9).

What all these definitions capture is the acknowledgement that autoethnography allows for an understanding of personal experience intersecting with a social and cultural context. In common with ethnography, which attempts to understand and interpret a particular cultural system, such as an organisation, by immersion of the researcher in that setting (Van Maanen, 1988, 2006), autoethnography also examines a social and cultural context, but through the personal experience of the researcher. It involves turning the ethnographic gaze on the self, while maintaining the outward gaze of ethnography, looking at the larger context where such experiences occur (Denzin, 2014). As such, autoethnography has the potential to be used in many empirical sites and in relation to many topics as discussed later in this chapter. Autoethnography has a narrative component, though that may take a number of different forms such as stories, poems, performance or vignettes as discussed later in this chapter. Autoethnography can also refer to both a methodological approach to research, wherein the researcher reflexively interprets their own experience in relation to a cultural context, *and* the resultant outcome or product of that interpretation or research in the form of a narrative.

However, my conceptualisation of autoethnography that I have used to position my own work is as follows:

Autoethnography is a genre of qualitative research which uses reflexive autobiographical writing to analyse the self in a specific social and cultural context. It encapsulates a personal, intuitive knowledge, derived from a knowing, situated, subject, which is analysed in relation to theory (Haynes, 2013, p. 381).

As a *genre*, this tries to capture the extent to which autoethnography is a style or wide categorisation of research approaches using autobiographical material, with a nod to its literary, poetic or aesthetic tradition, and performative or embodied experience. The *reflexive* element is to acknowledge not only the positioning of the researcher in the research as a subject of inquiry, but to embed and make explicit the underlying ontology of the self, the researcher or the *auto* of the autoethnography. The second part of the above definition suggests that the value of the *knowledge* derived from autoethnography is subjective (for example, drawing from experience, emotion and identity) and also inter-subjective, in relation to self-other, self-culture, self-social context. From this perspective, the ability to *analyse*, and importantly analyse in *relation to theory*, is fundamental. Some theoretically informed interpretation of experience is central to this definition of autoethnography.

What these definitions of the form have in common is the linking of some dimensions of the self (*auto*), the socio/cultural (*ethno*) and forms of representation or writing (*graphic*). However, where approaches to autoethnography differ is in the nature of and the degree of analysis that occurs within the narrative, and the ontological and epistemological positioning of the author in various research traditions which will affect the form of autoethnography. The degree to which this is represented in various forms of autoethnography is discussed in the next section.

FORMS OF AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

What has been termed the narrative turn in social science research brings 'a subjective or cultural turn in which personal and social meanings as bases of action gain greater prominence' (Chamberlayne et al., 2000, p. 1). It has enabled a multiple conceptualisation of scholarly work away from the

objective and distanced observer towards a subjective, culturally engaged and emotive researcher (Grant et al., 2013). This enables autoethnography to be conceptualised as an alternative to conventional, realist or positivist forms of writing and research. However, even within autoethnographical research itself there are different approaches and analytical traditions. This section will evaluate and illustrate with examples what I perceive to be the dominant forms of autoethnography represented in the literature: evocative, analytical, dramaturgical and poetic, interpretive and critical.

Evocative

Evocative forms of autoethnography have dominated some early forms of the genre, deriving from the sociological and communications tradition, and exemplified in the work of Carolyn Ellis and Art Bochner (see, for example, Ellis, 2000, 2004; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Their heartfelt and often emotional approach to autoethnography, with introspective narrative focusing on the auto-dimension of autoethnography, is what has come to be termed evocative autoethnography (Anderson, 2006; Doloriert & Sambrook, 2012; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Learmonth & Humphreys, 2012). Ellis and Bochner's position on autoethnography is that it allows for the examination of the self, emotions and experiences as they are affected by social and cultural structures (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). The form this takes is to expose personal and vulnerable aspects of the self, in often dramatic and evocative form, in order to increase self-understanding. Often the narrative centres on some form of critical event, turning point or epiphany which has shaped or formed the writer in some way, or caused them to reflect on their own life. For example, in this extract Ellis writes about the experience of visiting and caring for her sick elderly mother in hospital:

I hold my arms out straight again. When she grabs on, she and I pull her to a standing position. When she winces in pain I embrace her around her middle steadying her for the long journey back to bed, eight feet away. The tubes extending from her chest and abdomen, the bile-bag necklace – all are properly positioned. She shuffles her feet in baby steps, all the while holding onto my outstretched arms. She looks into my eyes as I walk backwards, to pick up my cues, when to move forward, when to turn. We are intimately connected. We are totally trusting (Ellis, 1996; cited in Ellis, 2004, p. 134).

The account has a sense of immediacy and presence derived from the use of writing in the present tense, even though the narrative is based on memory and reflection. The larger piece is a visceral account of the weakness of bodies and bodily functions; an acknowledgement of love and regret, and the juxtaposition of birth and death in the centrality of life. Yet, these points are not formally analysed as such in the narrative; they are left for the reader to interpret and reflect upon. According to Ellis (2004, p. 135) 'Good autoethnographic writing is truthful, vulnerable, evocative, and therapeutic', but, as seen here, not overtly and explicitly analytical. This may be why the focus on the self in some forms of autoethnography is characterised as both easy and self-indulgent, as argued against by Sparkes (2002). The degree of analysis in evocative autoethnography varies, but it tends towards the representational and emotive rather than the analytic. For example, Parry (2012) combines what he himself defines as evocative autoethnography from mostly diary entries and reflective narrative accounts of being a football fan, with some evaluation of the nature of sporting passions to provide and give insights into the nature of sporting obsession. Rather than hiding behind an illusion of objectivity, emotive, vulnerable and sensuously poetic, autoethnographers may place themselves closer to the subjects they study (Pelias, 2004) and by exposing their own lives, touch the lives of their readers (Holman-Jones et al., 2013; Richardson, 2000).

Analytical

In contrast to evocative, analytical autoethnography defined and coined by Anderson (2006) tends to acknowledge more explicitly the researcher's position in a research community, the experience of fieldwork, and the theoretical contributions of the research in distinct and separate points of the narrative (Adams et al., 2015). In arguing for this form, Anderson (2006, pp. 386–7) suggests:

The purpose of analytic ethnography is not simply to document personal experience, to provide an 'insider's perspective', or to evoke emotional resonance with the reader. Rather, the defining characteristic of analytic social science is to use empirical data to gain insight into some broader set of social phenomena than those provided by the data themselves.

He positions analytical autoethnography as an alternative to evocative autoethnography and argues for five key features of analytic autoethnography: 1) complete member research status; 2) analytical reflexivity; 3) narrative visibility of the researcher's self; 4) dialogue with informants beyond the self; and 5) commitment to theoretical analysis (Anderson, 2006, p. 378). Complete member status refers to the researcher being fully immersed in the social world under study, 'conferring the most compelling kind of "being there" on the ethnographer' (Anderson, 2006, p. 379), which can occur through chance, such as in the case of illness, or through choice, such as through recreational or lifestyle activity. Analytic reflexivity refers to the awareness of the reciprocal influence between the autoethnographer, their context and other members. This interrelates with the needs for enhanced visibility of the self in the text through the recounting of experiences of the researcher and others, that demonstrate the researcher's personal engagement with the world under study and analytic insights (Anderson, 2006). In contrast to evocative forms of autoethnography which Anderson (Anderson, 2006, p. 386) argues seek 'narrative fidelity only to the researcher's subjective

experience', analytical forms are grounded in self-experience but reach beyond it by being informed by dialogue with others. Most importantly for Anderson, analytical autoethnographers gain insight into a broader set of social phenomena than that provided by the data themselves through the use of analysis. However, while Anderson refers to this dimension as theoretical analysis, it is unclear to what degree this would actually use social theories or inform new theories; rather, he points to 'a broad set of data-transcending practices that are directed toward theoretical development, refinement and extension' (Anderson, 2006, p. 387).

An example of such an analytical form might be Davie's autoethnographical account of the experiences and processes of conducting PhD research on accounting for Fijian pine forests, including how and why methodological themes and theoretical frameworks are selected, in what she terms 'the serendipitous and fortuitous choices made' (Davie, 2008, p. 1055):

The search for permissible Habermasian explanations about accounting's accessibility and acceptability within the pine forests culminated in an enormous amount of data. These were collected at various levels, in both the Fijian and the wider South Pacific context. As the connection between accounting, the Chiefly hegemony, communal interests, and pine-forest activities was theorised, the empirical focus was gradually being redefined and the extant data re-interpreted and on occasions filed away . . . Engrossed in a whirlpool of confusion, anxiety, excitement and a peculiar awareness of the ambiguities in accounting in the pine forests, refuge and help was sought in theoretical and empirical discussion with colleagues (both sympathetic and unsympathetic to my research style); in literature on political economy, sociology, modernity and postmodernity; multiple re-readings of articles on Habermasian studies of accounting (Davie, 2008, p. 1064).

The account contains much less, though is not completely without, emotion and vulnerability. It analyses Davie's initial preoccupations with an a priori conceptual framework, and how these shifted to new theorising. Such

analytic autoethnographies produce a more realist account of ethnographic practice.

Dramaturgical and Poetic

In contrast, some dramaturgical and poetic forms of autoethnography allow the writer to experiment with the interaction of different forms of literary representation and analysis of the self in a cultural context. Such autoethnographies may take the form of poetry (De Villiers & De Villiers, 2012; Faulkner, 2009; Spry, 2001), dramatic novels (Ellis, 2004), and dramatic interludes (Ellis & Bochner, 1992; Lawrence, 2014). Not all poetry or drama would be considered autoethnographical, but when it confirms the central tenets of autoethnography in making contributions to knowledge, valuing the personal and experiential, demonstrating the craft and power of storytelling, and taking a responsible approach to research practice and representation (Adams et al., 2015), it can be considered autoethnography. Importantly it has to have ‘aesthetic merit’ (Richardson, 2000, p. 254) and exhibit accessible literary qualities such as being lyrical, dramatically evocative or aesthetically effective (Denzin, 2014).

An example of this form of autoethnography is exemplified by Ross (2016) who incorporates autoethnographical narrative poems into her PhD thesis. In this extract, she uses short rhythmic poetic stanzas, interspersed with short discussions, to represent her life history in a way that is both emotionally engaging and analytical:

Planning was tight
For my pregnancy
Finished the same time
As my accounting degree

My baby was small
When work made the call
They wanted me to come in
At the beginning of the fall

A struggle between
My family and work

For neither of these
I wanted to shirk

Vacation got shuffled
All over the place
Because the work training
Was saving my place

It interrupted a time
That was for my son
And when it was over
Breastfeeding was done

I cried on the inside
But outside looked strong
To mother or audit
The struggle was long

These stanzas highlight one of the many struggles between my identity as a mother and as a professional accountant. I continue to feel the emotional struggle each time I read these words. I was very invested in my identity as an auditor at the time. Although I had been raising my daughter, at first on my own and then with my husband, I had never felt that the two identities were competing. I had, until that point, felt that I was balancing the two quite easily. Adding another child as well as progressing in my career meant that the two roles were in competition with one another for time and identity. These stanzas also show that I was learning to ‘play the game’ as Bourdieu would say (Bourdieu, 1990, pp. 66–68). I understood that the rules of the game included hiding my embodied self, my pregnancy, as well as being available and giving work top priority; becoming that neutral, but actually male-gendered employee (as discussed by Acker, 1990) (Ross, 2016, pp. 195–6).

Not all poetic and dramaturgical autoethnography is so explicitly analytical; yet analysis occurs in the minds of the author in writing the text and the reader in interpreting the text. Poetry can contain what Spry (2001) deems required elements of autoethnography: to be well written, emotionally engaging, critically self-reflective, participative and embodied, weaving both story and theory. It allows what Denzin (2014, p. 77) terms ‘the dialogical requirement’ whereby by being moved by a text, autoethnographical writers value work that invites them into another person’s experience, allowing them to bring new meaning

to the written text, informed by their own theoretical understandings.

Interpretive and Critical

Denzin (2013, 2014) takes a position on what he terms ‘interpretive autoethnography’ as where the explicit subjectivity of the researcher is permeated by relations with, and interest in, subjects other than him or herself. He sets interpretive autoethnography around an epiphanous or meaningful event in a subject’s life, where this event, how it is experienced and how it is woven through the multiple strands of a person’s life, becomes the focus of critical interpretive inquiry (Denzin, 2013). This critical component is important since Denzin argues that interpretive autoethnography has ‘a commitment to a social justice agenda – to inquiry that explicitly addresses issues of inequity and injustice in particular social movements and places’ (Denzin, 2014, p. x).

Other autoethnographers explicitly position their work as ‘critical autoethnography’ with an ethical responsibility to address injustice or unfairness, acknowledge privilege or marginalisation, reflexively recognise subjectivity, and address cultural inequalities and social injustice (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014). Critical autoethnographies give overt critiques of cultural identities, experiences, practices and cultural systems, to address instances of unfairness or injustice (Adams et al., 2015). For example, Morella-Pozzi (2014) provides a strong critique of the practices within higher education in relation to disability, in an account that intersects dramatic interludes with discussion and analysis:

‘You seem upset, what happened?’ Ruby asks me over lunch. She is my best friend and knows when I am hiding something, especially something unpleasant.

‘I’m having more problems with grad school. I can’t explain how insulting they have been and how much I have come to resent the administration, especially my disability advisor’.

‘Tell me what happened . . . all of it’. (Morella-Pozzi, 2014, p. 177)

The workshop proctors brought their own socially constructed ideas of non-visible disability to the workshop. They knew they would have to interact with someone who has a non-visible disability, yet they did not stop to check their own perceptions and compare their expectations with the reality of the situation. . . . no-one acknowledged the power discrepancies, inequities, prejudices or insults that were present. No one even acknowledged that this could happen or how many times it has happened before. (Morella-Pozzi, 2014, p. 185)

Hence, critical autoethnographers are concerned with the Other, and with themselves as Other, in order to address issues such as intersecting, marginalised, privileged or silenced identities, within potentially oppressive cultural contexts.

INTERACTING FORMS OF AUTOETHNOGRAPHY AND DIFFERENT EPISTEMOLOGICAL APPROACHES

These different forms of autoethnography discussed above are not mutually exclusive, but they generate a different feel to the narrative, being more or less evocative, and a varying level of criticality and analysis. Writers have also explicitly made use of different forms to address similar issues. For example, Learmonth and Humphreys (2012) play with different forms of autoethnography resonating with analytic and evocative, in what they term a ‘double autoethnography’, to ‘show how multiple accounts of the same phenomena written over time (and therefore written by different versions of the self) can be a valuable way of doing autoethnography’ (Learmonth & Humphreys, 2012, p. 101) and to have analytic engagement with ideas about identity and identity work. Their article provides a distinctive overview of both these autoethnographical forms and illustrates how evocative autoethnographies provide identity scholars, and others, with new forms of

empirical material, while also highlighting possibilities of and the need for analytical experimentation.

My own autoethnographical work has also demonstrated that the forms of autoethnography discussed above are not mutually exclusive (Haynes, 2006a, 2006b, 2013). For example, in an analysis of sexuality and sexual symbolism in an accounting firm (Haynes, 2013), I combine elements of evocative writing, critical analysis and interpretation to evaluate personal experiences and memories surrounding gender domination, culture and power in my working life as a woman. This autoethnography takes the form of a number of short illustrative vignettes interwoven with reflections on observations and emotions, and in relation to theoretical perspectives, designed to enable a retrospective, reflexive interpretation of previous events and experiences (Haynes, 2013):

I notice the image on the calendar in the boys' room almost as soon as I walk in. A bare and large breasted woman smiles from the glossy paper. I am not sure whether to draw attention to it or ignore it, but I am perturbed by the graphic nature of the image, as well as surprised by its incongruity in an accounting office. Why is it here? What is the point? The image discomforts, angers and saddens me. [Vignette – (Haynes, 2013, p. 386)]

...there is a strong relationship between identity formation, gender and sexuality. While sexuality forms part of personal identity, gender identity is how one makes sense of being a man or a woman within society. Identities emerge from within the relationships between the self and society, between individuals and discursive practices. Identities may be developed by individuals, but within constrained circumstances which may be highly communalistic and political. As gender identity is fundamentally social, institutions and organisations both contribute to and undermine it. The ordering of activities, practices and structures within organisations support gendering as a system or process which shapes identities. (Haynes, 2013, p. 391)

The vignettes, written in the present tense to capture and illustrate evocative and epiphanous moments, are based on real events but

are also certainly a narrative construction. Unlike Anderson's (2006) concept of analytical autoethnography, however, which seems to assume that the researcher has an intent to research the field while he or she is in the field, this approach uses narrative, memory and retrospection, interwoven with analysis, to make sense of past experiences, emotions and turning points. Critical interpretation is provided through the use of theorisation on gender and culture. This approach combines some elements of more constructed evocative autoethnography with more conventional academic constructs.

There is no right or wrong way of researching and writing autoethnography. The degree of emotion, vulnerability, analysis, interpretation, aesthetic poeticism or embodied interaction will depend on the nature of the research topic and the style of the writer. However, it also relates to the positioning of the researcher in respect of their ontology, or view of reality, and its relationship with the production of knowledge (epistemology) and the processes of knowledge production (methodology). Autoethnography has both an ontological dimension, as it constructs our positioning in the world, through our telling of stories to ourselves and others about ourselves, and an epistemological dimension, as a means by which we understand and know the social world (Haynes, 2006a). Autoethnographers access their own ontology, making themselves an object for analytical discussion, in a way that links epistemology and methodology. Autoethnography becomes an epistemological and methodological approach, rather than simply a research method or data resource. It is a way of knowing and a way of researching, informed by valuing the subjective in conjunction with the social. However, its style and form will be influenced by the degree of representational realism adopted by the researcher. As Grant et al. (2013, p. 5) point out, 'this is played out in the politics of autoethnographical representational practices, with normative cultural assumptions arguably frequently forming

the framing backdrop in autoethnographies which tend towards the tradition of conventional qualitative inquiry and voice'. By this they mean that autoethnographies may reflect an ideology which takes for granted social, political and organisational structures, rather than disrupting them. As a result, they argue for the use of a narrative poststructural voice using fictional, satirical or provisional truths to destabilise conventional qualitative and autoethnographical approaches, to highlight overlapping, intersecting and often contradictory discourses, and to reject 'hegemonic assumptions of universally shared reality positions ... seen in some examples of evocative and therapeutic autoethnography' (Grant et al., 2013, pp. 8–9).

EXAMPLES OF AUTOETHNOGRAPHY IN ORGANISATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

Within the organisation studies and management research context there are many examples of issues that have been addressed using autoethnography, including identity formation (Haynes, 2006a; Learmonth & Humphreys, 2012), illness and bullying (Vickers, 2002), academic careers (Haynes et al., 2014; Humphreys, 2005), academic performance management (Malsch & Tessier, 2015; Sparkes, 2007), employee engagement (Sambrook et al., 2014), workaholism (Boje & Tyler, 2008), motherhood and academia (Haynes & Fearfull, 2008), and teaching practices (Humphreys, 2006; Lawrence, 2014). It is also relevant to explore wider social issues such as pilgrimage (Slavin, 2003), consumerism (Hackley, 2007), illness (Minge & Sterner, 2014) and violence (Metta, 2013). Table 2.1 provides more detail of the research question or area addressed; the theoretical or conceptual emphasis; the form of autoethnography or the general balance of its form if it straddles different approaches; the style of the autoethnography; and a summary of its outcomes.

No subject is out of reach of autoethnographers if it enables an analysis of the self in relation to the social context.

CHALLENGES WITHIN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

Ethical Dilemmas

Since autoethnography requires by its very nature the divulgence of personal subjectivities, it requires a considerable sensitivity to research ethics. All research, especially qualitative research involving the disclosure of personal information, requires ethical consideration in relation to safeguarding participants' privacy and/or anonymity. Anonymisation of the researcher as subject of the research is not possible within autoethnography, so the various degrees of exposure bring ethical considerations to writing and publishing autoethnographically. Doloriert and Sambrook (2012) suggest these ethical concerns are threefold: first is protecting the participants within the ethnos of the study; second, the relational ethics of those other parties revealed in the study; and third, the auto-ethics of revealing the autoethnographer's identity both during a blind review process and for publication. The reveal for the autoethnographer may cause a degree of vulnerability or pain which is difficult to cope with or manage (Doloriert & Sambrook, 2009) and which can potentially do harm to the researcher themselves by exposing them to further distress. Any compulsion to reveal through examination processes of doctoral candidates could expose students to physical or psychological harm through self-disclosure (Doloriert & Sambrook, 2009). On the other hand, some autoethnographers find great strength and freedom in addressing difficult or traumatic issues, such as sexual violence (Metta, 2013) or serious illness (Minge & Sterner, 2014). Others find that retrospective autoethnographical analysis of situations

Table 2.1 Examples of autoethnographical approaches

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Research question or area addressed</i>	<i>Theoretical or conceptual emphasis</i>	<i>Form of auto ethnography or balance of form</i>	<i>Style</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Haynes 2006	Identity formation of accountants and mothers	Feminism Narrative	Analytical/ evocative	Vignettes	Derivation of methodological principles to research lived experience and identity
Learmonth and Humphreys 2012	Identity work in academia	Literary Critical narrative	Analytical/ evocative	Vignettes, 'case studies'	Case studies in identity work. Value of experimentation with novels and literary sources
Vickers 2002	Illness/Bullying	Narrative	Evocative/ analytical	Vignettes	Researcher as storyteller can have positive outcomes
Humphreys 2005	Academic careers	Reflexivity	Analytical/ evocative/ critical	Vignettes	Autoethnography as means of enhancing the representational richness and reflexivity of qualitative research
Haynes, Grugulis et al. 2014	Identity work Academic careers	Identity theory	Analytical	Group interviews Autoethnographies (individual and collective)	The functions of an identity workspace in mid-career identity work by management academics
Sparkes 2007	Academic performance management	Embodiment Performativity	Evocative (deliberately not analytical)	Stories	Insights into academic audit cultures
Malsch and Tessier 2015	Academic performance management	Identity fragmentation Identity politicization	Critical	Personal narratives	Effects of research incentive policies on academics
Sambrook, Jones et al. 2014	Employee engagement	Engagement	Interpretivist	Personal reflections	Understanding of how employee engagement works through, innovative use of AE

(Continued)

Table 2.1 Examples of autoethnographical approaches (Continued)

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Research question or area addressed</i>	<i>Theoretical or conceptual emphasis</i>	<i>Form of auto ethnography or balance of form</i>	<i>Style</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Boje and Tyler 2008	Workaholism	8 steps of deconstruction for narrative knowing	Narrative Critical	Stories	Dialectical understanding of workaholism through relationship between representational narrative and living story
Haynes and Fearfull 2008	Motherhood and academia	Identity Gender Stereotyping Power	Critical	Vignettes	Possibilities for resistance to gendered stereotypes by women academics
Humphreys 2006	Teaching practices	Pedagogy Learning approaches	Interpretivist/critical	Reflections and personal experiences	Generates some original ideas about teaching research methods in business schools via a mix of autoethnography and music Value of self-reflexivity
Lawrence 2014	Research supervision of students	Research supervision as social practice	Interpretivist	Personal reflection / Confession Dramatic dialogues	Understanding the social and political element of research practice
Slavin 2003	Pilgrimage	Embodiment – walking as spiritual practice Liminality	Interpretivist	Personal reflection	Liminality supports thinking about forms of alterity and marginality
Hackley 2007	Consumerism Market research	Creative non-fiction	Interpretivist	'Digressive interludes' Stories	A stronger focus on research writing craft can liberate the imagination of research respondents and enrich the analysis of narrative forms of qualitative data
Minge and Sterner 2014	Illness	Personal experience of cancer	Evocative/poetic	Stories, snippets, dialogues	Insights into embodied experience
Metta 2013	Domestic and sexual violence	Feminist Post-structuralist	Evocative/poetic	Poems/paintings & visual images	Going beyond violence through reflexive autoethnography

where the researcher was potentially put at personal risk can be helpful for future researchers (Yassour-Borochowitz, 2012).

The consideration of and anonymisation of related parties who figure in autoethnographical narratives has to be considered carefully, since they could not only be identified but affected by the intimate and often emotive disclosures revealed. For example, in the excerpt previously quoted in this chapter in relation to Ellis's mother being cared for in hospital, *Maternal Connections*, Ellis (2004, see pages 144–55) discusses at length the fact that she did not ask permission of her mother before exposing this work, or give her sight of it until much later after publication, thus raising ethical issues of exposing her mother's vulnerability and frail physicality. The resulting dilemmas of potential harm or perceived disrespect to other parties have to be considered. In my own autoethnographical work I wrote about the difficulties of balancing professional life and motherhood (Haynes, 2006a), which my own child on reading it experienced as rather sad, although did not disapprove of it as such. For these reasons, autoethnographers have to consider the degree to which they disclose issues which affect other parties as well as themselves. Similarly, in the review process for journals and upon publication organisations or individuals could potentially be revealed, which in the case of highly critical issues could be controversial. For example, in the case of my autoethnography of sexuality within an accounting firm, the firm was carefully anonymised to prevent any potential issues on publications and the paper was scrutinised by lawyers before publication, thus revealing that it was considered by those lawyers in a highly realist paradigm.

Representation

To avoid or mitigate against some of these ethical disclosure dilemmas, autoethnographers can use a number of approaches. Some writers,

particular when including autoethnographical material as part of a larger study, present themselves as a research participant in a more anonymised detached way (cf. Harding et al., 2010), though this then often diverges from what autoethnography might be said to represent. The use of vignettes, dramatic episodes and even poetry can provide representations of experiences without directly naming or fully describing them. Representationally real, yet partly fictionalised accounts, known variously as 'ethnographic fiction science' (Watson, 2000), 'semi-fictional ethnography' (Humphreys & Watson, 2009), 'ethnographic fictions' (Inckle, 2010) or similar, can support the preservation of key truths about experience and processes without exposing the researcher or organisational context in which they are embedded to risk. Other approaches to protect related parties to the autoethnographer involve the use of composite characters based on but not wholly accurately representing the actual people (Ellis, 2004).

Validity and Truth

This may subject autoethnography to debates about validity and truth, but autoethnography does not seek an objective truth; rather than relying on questions of truth and validity, autoethnographical researchers are responsible for selecting, representing and interpreting experiences to inform meanings and shared understandings (Haynes, 2011). For the autoethnographer, 'validity means that a work has verisimilitude. It evokes a feeling that the experience described is true, coherent, believable, and connects the reader to the writer's world' (Denzin, 2013). 'Validity is interpretive and dependent on context and the understandings we bring to the observation' (Ellis, 2004, p. 123). Hence, traditional concepts of validity are overturned to encompass what may be a composite, partial or fictive 'truth', but which nonetheless resonates as narrative rather than literal truth, based on how the author and reader responds.

The Role of Reflexivity

The need for reflexivity in autoethnography has been stressed throughout this chapter. Reflexivity is the subject of Chapter 23 of this *Handbook* so it will not be covered in detail, but it is worth some further consideration of how reflexivity pertains to autoethnography. In simple terms, reflexivity is an awareness of the researcher's role in the practice of research and the way this is influenced by the object of the research, enabling the researcher to acknowledge the way in which he or she affects both the research processes and outcomes (Haynes, 2012). In the case of autoethnography, the researcher's role in the process means that they are immersed in the cultural setting and the subject of the research, though their actual analysis of this experience may be retrospective rather than contemporaneous. A reflexive approach means problematising this immersion, understanding and acknowledging the reciprocal interaction of self with others, to consider how the research is influenced by the values and actions of others as well as one's own. Moreover, being reflexive requires awareness and consideration of how the autoethnographer may be transformed by the process itself. For example, following a research project I wrote an autoethnographical account of how the project was transformative in two ways: first through the process of engaging with autoethnography and listening to the oral history narratives, I came to know myself better by observing and reflecting on the experiences presented by others, articulating my own story, and by reflexively reviewing my own experiences in the light of other's narratives; and, second, how engagement with theoretical perspectives on identity, the politics of motherhood and the sociology of the accounting profession gave me some new insights into my own position (Haynes, 2006b).

The autoethnographer will also be present in the outcome of the research, in the text itself, in whatever form that takes. Hence

they have to be aware of how they position themselves, as self and in relation to others, in the text. Reflexive autoethnography shows awareness of the power relations inherent in the research and in the representation of others, where the researcher has the decisive authority about what to include and in what form. The degree to which emotive, deeply personal or challenging disclosures are made in autoethnographies will differ depending on the balance between evocative, analytical or other forms; but the researcher should reflexively engage with the effects of their choice of text. Being reflexive, therefore, incorporates a need to be aware of the interaction within autoethnography of the three areas discussed above in this section: ethics, representation, and validity and truth. Ultimately it results in enhanced meanings and outcomes. As Berry suggests:

Reflexivity entails taking seriously the self's location(s) in culture and scholarship, circumspectively exploring our relationships to/in autoethnography, to make research and cultural life better and more meaningful. (Berry, 2013, p. 212)

CONCLUSION

The Future for Autoethnography

In summary, autoethnography represents a rich methodological and epistemological approach to the analysis of the self in a social context. While it takes numerous forms as identified in this chapter, whether evocative, analytical, dramaturgical and poetic, interpretive and critical, each of them brings about new possibilities for research that links the auto (self), ethno (socio-cultural) and the graphic (forms of writing). Moreover, autoethnography enables the reflexive interpretation of previous events and experiences, so that pre-existing understanding is constantly revised in the light of new understandings and in relation to theory (Haynes, 2013).

As such autoethnography brings a host of potential opportunities for future research. It can be applied to any organisational issue or problem involving human interaction in a particular socio-cultural context. It could even be applied in a virtual, as well as physical, socio-cultural context, through the use of online spaces and worlds, which would raise all the more challenges in relation to ethical dilemmas, representation, validity and truth due to the impersonal nature of online representation. However, new and innovative autoethnographical forms of narrative using combinations of poetry, vignettes, drama, performance, art, blogs, as well as novels, essays and stories, can be applied to any of these challenges, raising numerous possibilities for the expanded use of autoethnography in qualitative research.

REFERENCES

- Acker, J. (1990) Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations. *Gender and Society*, 4(2), 139–58.
- Adams, T. E., Holman-Jones, S. & Ellis, C. (2015) *Autoethnography: Understanding Qualitative Research*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Anderson, L. (2006) Analytic Autoethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 35(4), 373–95.
- Berry, K. (2013) Spinning Reflexivity, Cultural Critique, and Negotiating Selves, in Holman-Jones, S., Adams, T. E. & Ellis, C. (eds), *Handbook of Autoethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 209–27.
- Boje, D. M. & Tyler, J. (2008) Story and Narrative Noticing: Workaholic Autoethnographies. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 84(2), 173–94.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The Logic of Practice*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Boylorn, R. M. & Orbe, M. P. (eds) (2014) *Critical Autoethnography: Intersecting Cultural Identities in Everyday Life*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Chamberlayne, P., Bornat, J. & Wengraf, T. (eds) (2000) *The Turn to Biographical Methods in Social Science*. London: Routledge.
- Davie, S. S. K. (2008) An Autoethnography of Accounting Knowledge Production: Serendipitous & Fortuitous Choices for Understanding Our Social World. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 19(7), 1054–79.
- Denzin, N. K. (2013) Interpretive Autoethnography, in Holman-Jones, S., Adams, T. E. & Ellis, C. (eds), *Handbook of Autoethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 123–42.
- Denzin, N. K. (2014) *Interpretive Autoethnography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- De Villiers, C. & De Villiers, R. (2012) The Influence of Epistemology: An Auto-Ethnography. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 26(1), 159–61.
- Doloriert, C. & Sambrook, S. (2009) Ethical Confessions of the 'I' of Autoethnography: The Student's Dilemma. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 4(1), 27–45.
- Doloriert, C. & Sambrook, S. (2012) Organisational Autoethnography. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, 1(1), 83–95.
- Ellis, C. (1996) Maternal Connections, in Ellis, C. & Bochner, A. P. (eds), *Composing Ethnography: Alternative Forms of Qualitative Writing*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 240–3.
- Ellis, C. (2000) Creating Criteria: An Autoethnographic Short Story. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 6(2), 273–7.
- Ellis, C. (2004) *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Ellis, C. & Bochner, A. P. (1992) Telling and Performing Personal Stories: The Constraints of Choice in Abortion, in Ellis, C. & Flaherty, M. G. (eds), *Investigating Subjectivity: Research on Lived Experience*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 79–101.
- Ellis, C. & Bochner, A. P. (2000) Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject, in Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 733–68.

- Faulkner, S. L. (2009) *Poetry as Method: Reporting Research Through Verse*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Grant, A., Short, N. P. & Turner, L. (2013) Introduction: Storying Life and Lives, in Short, N. P., Turner, L. & Grant, A. (eds), *Contemporary British Autoethnography*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Hackley, C. (2007) Auto-Ethnographic Consumer Research and Creative Non-Fiction: Exploring Connections and Contrasts from a Literary Perspective. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 10(1), 98–108.
- Harding, N., Ford, J. & Gough, B. (2010) Accounting for Ourselves: Are Academics Exploited Workers? *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 21(2), 107–70.
- Haynes, K. (2006a) Linking Narrative and Identity Construction: Using Autobiography in Accounting Research. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 17(4), 399–418.
- Haynes, K. (2006b) A Therapeutic Journey?: Reflections on the Impact of Research on Researcher and Participant. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 1(3), 204–21.
- Haynes, K. (2011) Tensions in (Re)Presenting the Self in Reflexive Autoethnographical Research. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 6(2), 134–49.
- Haynes, K. (2012) Reflexivity, in Cassell, C. & Symon, G. (eds), *The Practice of Qualitative Organizational Research: Core Methods and Current Challenges*. London: Sage.
- Haynes, K. (2013) Sexuality and Sexual Symbolism as Processes of Gendered Identity Formation: An Autoethnography of an Accounting Firm. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 26(3), 374–98.
- Haynes, K. & Fearfull, A. (2008) Exploring Our Selves: Exploiting and Resisting Gendered Identities in Accounting and Management Academia. *Pacific Accounting Review*, 20(2), 185–204.
- Haynes, K., Grugulis, I., Spring, M., Blackmon, K., Battisti, G. & Ng, I. (2014) A Two-Year Stretch: The Functions of an Identity Workspace in Mid-Career Identity Work by Management Academics. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 23(4), 379–92.
- Holman-Jones, S., Adams, T. E. & Ellis, C. (2013) Coming to Know Autoethnography as More than a Method, in Holman-Jones, S., Adams, T. E. & Ellis, C. (eds), *Handbook of Autoethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 17–47.
- Humphreys, M. (2005) Getting Personal: Reflexivity and Autoethnographic Vignettes. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(6), 840–60.
- Humphreys, M. (2006) Teaching Qualitative Research Methods: I'm Beginning to See the Light. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 1(3), 173–88.
- Humphreys, M. & Watson, T. J. (2009) Ethnographic Practices: From 'Writing-Up Ethnographic Research' to 'Writing Ethnography', in Ybema, S., Yanow, D., Wels, H. & Kamsteeg, F. (eds), *Organizational Ethnography: Studying the Complexities of Everyday Life*. London: Sage, 40–55.
- Inckle, K. (2010) Telling Tales? Using ethnographic fictions to speak embodied 'truth'. *Qualitative Research*, 10(1), 27–47.
- Lawrence, S. (2014) Super-Vision? Personal Experiences of an Accounting Academic. *Meditari Accountancy Research*, 22(1), 38–53.
- Learmonth, M. & Humphreys, M. (2012) Autoethnography and Academic Identity: Glimpsing Business School Doppelgangers. *Organization*, 19(1), 99–117.
- Malsch, B. & Tessier, S. (2015) Journal Ranking Effects on Junior Academics: Identity Fragmentation and Politicization. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 26, 84–98.
- Metta, M. (2013) Putting the Body on the Line: Embodied Writing and Recovery through Domestic Violence, in Holman-Jones, S., Adams, T. E. & Ellis, C. (eds), *Handbook of Autoethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 486–509.
- Minge, J. M. & Sterner, J. B. (2014) The Transitory Radical: Making Place with Cancer, in Boylorn, R. M. & Orbe, M. P. (eds), *Critical Autoethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 33–46.
- Morella-Pozzi, D. (2014) The (Dis)Ability Double Life: Exploring Legitimacy, Illegitimacy, and the Terrible Dichotomy of (Dis)Ability in Higher Education, in Boylorn, R. M. & Orbe, M. P. (eds), *Critical Autoethnography: Intersecting Cultural Identities in Everyday Life*.

- Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 176–88.
- Parry, K. D. (2012) Game of Two Passions: A Football Fan's Autoethnography. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 12(2), 238–50.
- Pelias, R. J. (2004) *A Methodology of the Heart: Evoking Academic and Daily Life*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Reed-Danahay, D. E. (ed.), (1997) *Auto/ethnography: Rewriting the Self and the Social*. New York: Berg.
- Richardson, L. (2000) Evaluating Ethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 6(2), 253–5.
- Ross, K. (2016) The Interaction of Continuing Professional Development Experiences and Identity: Women Professional Accountants in Canada. Unpublished PhD thesis. Newcastle University, UK.
- Sambrook, S. A., Jones, N. & Doloriert, C. (2014) Employee Engagement and Autoethnography: Being and Studying Self. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 26(3/4), 172–87.
- Slavin, S. (2003) Walking as Spiritual Practice: The Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. *Body & Society*, 9(3), 1–18.
- Sparkes, A. C. (2002) Autoethnography: Self-Indulgence or Something More?, in Bochner, A. P. & Ellis, C. (eds), *Ethnographically Speaking: Autoethnography, Literature and Aesthetics*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 209–232.
- Sparkes, A. C. (2007) Embodiment, Academics, and the Audit Culture: A Story Seeking Consideration. *Qualitative Research*, 7(4), 521–50.
- Spry, T. (2001) Performing Autoethnography: An Embodied Methodological Praxis. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(6), 706–32.
- Van Maanen, J. (1988) *Tales of the Field*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Van Maanen, J. (2006) Ethnography Then and Now. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 1(1), 13–21.
- Vickers, M. H. (2002) Researchers as Storytellers: Writing on the Edge – And Without a Safety Net. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(5), 608–21.
- Watson, T. J. (2000) Ethnographic Fiction Science: Making Sense of Managerial Work and Organizational Research Processes with Caroline and Terry. *Organization*, 7(3), 489–510.
- Yassour-Borochowitz, D. (2012) 'Only If She Is Sexy': An Autoethnography of Female Researcher-Male Participants Relations. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 31(5/6), 402–17.

Archival Research

Albert J. Mills and Jean Helms Mills

INTRODUCTION

At its simplest, archival research can be said to involve the study of collections of documents (e.g. newsletters, annual reports, memoranda) and artifacts (e.g. uniforms, photographs) to gain an understanding of a selected organization (e.g. British Airways), leader (e.g. Sir Colin Marshall), or professional group (e.g. flight attendants). However, this ignores the fact that, like other research methods, archival research is informed by underlying research philosophies. In this chapter, we focus on three major research philosophies – modernist, postmodernist, and amodernist – and how they inform and shape archival research. Where possible we draw on all aspects of our own research because over the years we have moved from an initial modernist approach, to a postmodernist approach and, quite recently, an amodernist approach.¹

To begin with our three major approaches: in brief, the *modernist* approach views the

past as having an ontological basis in fact, whose factual traces can be found through – among other means – a methodical search through archival documents. The resulting narrative (or storied account) is an attempt to provide a history of what really or actually happened in the past (Elton, 1967). The *postmodernist* approach² views the past as ontologically unavailable. People and events in the past were real at the time but we can only re-present the past through narratives that rely on the dominant understanding of those people and events at the time but also in the present. In other words, there is a disconnect between the past and history (Munslow, 2010): the past is what happened before now and history is the attempt to reproduce the past through narrative (a story of events) or chronicles (a description of events). Finally, the *amodernist* approach focuses on how ‘knowledge of the past’ is socially constructed through a series of human (e.g. historians) and non-human (e.g. archives) actors

to create *a sense* of history (Durepos & Mills, 2012; see also Chapter 26 of this volume).

For respective modernist, postmodernist, and amodernist accounts, see Elton (1969, 1991), Jenkins (1991), and Durepos and Mills (this volume). For useful overviews of the field see Bryman et al. (2011), Durepos (2015), Jenkins (1995), and Rowlinson et al. (2014).

- Before doing archival research, you should become familiar with some of the key ontological and epistemological debates surrounding the understanding of history and the past.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ARCHIVAL RESEARCH?

Before you consider archival research, you need to have an understanding not only of *what* you are looking for but *why* and *how* you are looking for it. You need to know something about recent debates in management and organizational history about the nature of the past and history. A good place to start is Booth and Rowlinson's (2006) discussion of the 'historic' turn in management and organizational history. This is useful not only for understanding debates around what constitutes the past and history but also in discussing the range of methods and methodological approaches associated with different approaches. See also the debate between Toms and Wilson (2010) and Taylor et al. (2009).

Different approaches to history and the past shape not only *what* to look for 'in the' archives but also *how* to study archival materials and *where* to look for archives. For example, *modernist* historians tend to view archives as 'an empirical data corpus' of artifacts and documents that are usually associated with a physical location (McHoul & Grace, 2003, p. 30). These locations are often referred to as an archive where the purpose is to collect together a number of artifacts around a specific topic. It is a place where

elements, or traces, of the past can be studied through a search of documents (e.g. in-house newsletters) and other artifacts (e.g. airline uniforms). *Postmodernists*, on the other hand, are not simply looking for documents and other artifacts from the past but also the complex system of practices that underlie the way of collecting and ordering materials in an archive. Arguably, these practices 'govern one's manner of perceiving, judging, imagining and acting' (Flynn, 1996, p. 30) in ways that constitute an 'unconscious structuring of discourse' (May, 2006, pp. 38–9). This can influence what you come to view as (legitimate) knowledge and what counts as evidence of that knowledge. The *amodernist* focus is on gaining an understanding of the relationships between human (e.g. flight attendants), non-human (e.g. uniforms), and non-corporeal (e.g. airline stories) actants in the creation of a particular phenomenon (e.g. the association of females with flight attending and males as pilots).³ The essential idea here is to understand the production of knowledge (for example, discriminatory notions of women's roles at work) by tracing the relationships that come to constitute and maintain that 'knowledge'.

These three approaches generate different views of what constitutes an archive. From a *modernist* perspective, it can be argued that:

Archival records are an invaluable *tool* of *data* gathering ... that is focused on the past and its *impact* on the present. The careful analysis of archival records can provide valuable *information* of the life, concerns, and aspirations of individuals and groups, as well as on the activity, structure, mission, and goals of associations, organizations, and institutions. (Stan, 2010, p. 29, emphasis added)

This is a clear modernist account of the value of archival research. The *postmodernist* will contend that this type of account lures us into thinking that archival records, in themselves, embody some sort of fixed elements of empirical truth that can be uncovered through methodical techniques of collection and analysis of information-bearing data.

While modernists tend to talk about archives as physical locations that house a particular collection of documents and artifacts (e.g. the Pan American World Airways Collection at the Otto Richter Library of the University of Miami), postmodernists view ‘the archive’ as something broader. Thus, for example, Rostis (2015, p. 33), in his Foucauldian study of the discourse of humanitarianism, notes that:

The archive in its broadest sense is everywhere and not restricted to the four walls of an archival office of any one organization. Therefore, traces of constructs such as madness, discipline, or sexuality should be found in multiple places; Foucault's genealogies draw upon this feature and sweep quite broadly across sources, historical periods, and people.

In contrast, the amodernist views the archive – be it a specific building or broader social phenomena – as a potential nexus for the production of knowledge, a site of networked relations to be explored and uncovered.

This provides us with at least three forms of archive. The first is a formally constituted collection of documents and other artifacts at and as an ‘archive’. The second refers to a number of sites, including physically designated archives, which are thought to constitute the traces of a pattern of ideas and practices that influence our understandings of the past. The third refers to a site of outcomes of networked relationships. These various sites are thought to constitute a complex set of underlying rules or an *archive*. Following Mills and Helms Mills (2011), we will use the term archive to refer to the modernist notion and *archive* to refer to the postmodernist notion: either can be the starting point of a site of networked outcomes for the amodernist depending on where they focus their attention.

Despite the fundamental differences in approach you will still find *modernist*, *post-modernist*, and *amodernist* researchers in formally designated archives undertaking analyses of documents and other artifacts. Rostis (2015), for example, included in his

archival research, analysis of documents at the Museum of the International Red Cross in Geneva.

For simplicity sake, the focus of the rest of this chapter will be on formally constituted archives, defined as a collection of materials that serve to provide traces of the past of a particular organization (e.g. Air Canada⁴), organizational leader and other members (e.g. Juan Trippe, the former CEO of Pan Am, and female members of the same airline), or social phenomenon (e.g. Aviation and Space). This will allow us to focus on the value of documents, which is an important focus of various forms of archival research.

WHY DO ARCHIVAL RESEARCH?

The question of the value of archival research is often tied up with questions about the value of history and the past. If history and the past are important for business studies then, the argument goes, archives are an important source for tracing what happened before now.

Modernist

First, let us briefly review the argument for the importance of history and the past from the modernist perspective. Professor Alfred Kieser (1994), who has played an important role in encouraging an ‘historic turn’ in Management and Organization Studies (MOS), makes four key points for the value of history and the past:

- 1 ‘In order to understand contemporary institutions it is important to know something of their historical development’ (p. 609).
- 2 Historical analysis can reduce the ideological biases embedded in current ‘fashionable trends’ in MOS (p. 610).
- 3 We need to ‘interpret existing organizational structures not as determined by [objective] laws but as a result of decisions in past choice[s] ... whether intentional or implicit’ (p. 611).

- 4 'By confronting theories of organizational change with historical development, these theories can be subjected to a more radical test than they have to pass when merely being confronted with data on short-run changes' (p. 612).

Each of these points relies in large part on the availability of archives or accounts based on archival research. British Airways, for example, has been in operation, in one form or another, since 1919.⁵ While it is possible to conduct interviews with current and former employees of the airline, this approach would be limited to the number of people you could interview in a certain time span; the availability of people prepared to talk to you; the span of time that their experience would cover (most of those who worked for the airline before World War II would now be dead); and the memories of those interviewed. At the very least you would need to access company documents and other artifacts to verify and expand on what interviewees tell you. Existing published histories (e.g. Penrose, 1980) could also help to provide other insights into the company. However, the various documents to be found in an archive, including associated airline histories, were written for a specific purpose that may not address or reveal other purposes. For example, feminist studies of the airline industry (Barry, 2007; Yano, 2011) are more likely than not to be confronted by archival materials (and histories) that largely focus on men and machines.

Modernist accounts of management and organizational history include Urwick (1938), George (1968), Kieser (1994), Wren (2005), and Bowden and Lamond (2015).

Postmodernist

Postmodernists see value in archives for various reasons other than proof of any particular truth. Their interest is in the role that archives, as 'complex systems of rules', play in the construction of 'knowledge'. There are at

least two levels to this. The first one involves analysis of the materials themselves to reveal how corporate thinking and practices helped to socially construct particular discourses. For example, in our study of British Airways, we examined the airline's hiring and imaging of women to gain a sense of how discriminatory practices develop, are maintained and change over time (Mills, 2006). To do this we used the framework of the juncture (or 'a concurrence of events in time in which a series of images, impressions, and experiences come together, giving the appearance of a coherent whole that influences how an organization is understood' Mills, 2010, p. 509). This helped us to identify changing dominant corporate attitudes to the role of women over time and factors associated with the development, maintenance and change in selected practices.⁶ The second level is to examine how the archive itself serves to shape our understanding of the past. In a plea for 'a fuller reflection of the uses and limitations of the archive in business historical research', Schwarzkopf (2012, p. 1) cites Foucault's contention that 'archives are not just sites for the passive collection of records from the past. Rather, archives are very active in both enabling and limiting what we see, know, understand, and accept as real' (p. 9). To return to our study of British Airways, we found that much of what was collected and saved focused primarily on activities associated with men, such as piloting, engineering, and management at all levels. We note that the *association* between men and particular activities not only reflected dominant practices in the airline but also served to reinforce those associations. As our research went on to argue, a powerful discourse of gender relations played an important role in the development of British Airways, determining who was hired and to what position; who was privileged and who was marginalized in the stories told (e.g. detailed accounts of male airline pilots and managers) and the stories not told (e.g. the role of female pilots during World War II).

For a considerable period of time, a large number of corporate stories about female employees centered on sexuality and the female flight attendant as the leading, albeit marginalized, image of women in the airline industry (Helms Mills & Mills, 2008; Mills, 2006). Similarly, a discourse of colonialism is evident for much of British Airways' first forty or more years of operation. Here the archive neglects the impact of the airline on non-white members of the British Empire, both in terms of the airline's restricted hiring practices of non-white Africans and their imaging as irrational, menial labour, and basically savage (Mills, 1995).

Postmodernist accounts of management and organizational history include Jacques (1996), Rowlinson (2004), and McKinlay (2013).

Amodernist

Amodernist social scientists have come lately to archival research⁷ and are particularly interested in how histories are produced as an outcome of a series of actor-networked relations. Here the archive is of interest as a punctuated actor, i.e. *something* that is spoken of as if it is a single, albeit powerful, entity that offers a potential treasure trove of facts about a particular person, company, event, or period. Here the focus is not so much on developing histories out of available archival materials but rather analysis of how specific histories come to be developed. Myrick et al. (2013), for example, analyzed archival materials of the Academy of Management (AoM). The analysis was not to develop a new history of that association but rather to make sense of how the existing history of the association (see <http://aom.org/About-AOM/History.aspx>; Wrege, 1986) came into being, and what the implications are. We were particularly interested to see what coherence of actors worked together to create the idea of an association that has been continuously in operation since 1936. While

this point of longevity lent credence to the authority and legitimacy of the AoM, it papered over contrary details, such as the fact that the supposedly first two meetings (1936, 1937) were dinner meetings not conferences; that the name Academy of Management was retrospectively applied to the association at a later date; and that between 1941 and 1947 the association was basically defunct. Yet the 2011 conference was heralded as the 75th year of the AoM – dating the association back to 1936, while the 2015 conference was deemed the 75th conference – contradictorily dating the conferences back to 1941.

Amodernist accounts of management and organizational history include Bruce (2006), Bruce and Nyland (2011), Collier et al. (2015), Hartt et al. (2014), Myrick et al. (2013), and Shenhav and Weitz (2000).

- Archival research is useful for understanding relationships between the past and history in understanding management and organizations over time. Those insights can be in the form of establishing factual details of what really happened and their impact on current organizational reality (modernist); revealing powerful discourses and their influence on extant knowledge (post-modernist); and gaining insights into how history is produced as knowledge (amodernist).

THOROUGHLY MODERN MISSION

In this and the next section we will explore the methods and challenges faced by, respectively, modernists and then postmodernists and amodernists.

It would be doing a gross injustice to modernist researchers to suggest that they are unaware of the multitude of problems surrounding the gathering and analysis of archival material. Indeed, much of the discussion of archival research from a modernist perspective involves questions about focus, access, and the evaluation; collection and storage; evidentiary value and triangulation. Let's look at each in turn.

Focus

You may want to study some aspect of the history of a particular person, organization, phenomenon, etc. A couple of good places to start are lists of archival sources and histories of your chosen topic.

Archival source lists:

There are numerous online sources to available archives and their accessibility these days. A search by archives and then within the archive may provide useful clues to what you are looking for. For example, when, in an earlier modernist phase, we were interested in studying how organizational cultures develop, maintain, and change discriminatory practices over time, we looked around for a business that (a) had an existing and well-developed archive – to allow us to track different cultural artifacts; (b) had been in existence for at least 50 years – to allow us to study changes over relatively long time periods; (c) was internationally well-known – to provide us with an example that was of interest to a large number of potential readers/researchers, as well as being socio-economically powerful to have an influence on social thinking; (d) where possible, had a powerful socio-cultural association with gendered practices; and (e) had a number of published histories on the company. A search through a guide to British archives (Foster & Sheppard, 1989) led us to British Airways, which proved to be a treasure trove of documentation, artifact collections, documentary films, and photographs. The Archives and Museum collection included in-house newsletters⁸ (useful for tracking people and events over time), annual reports⁹ (providing clues to leading members of the airline and their strategic thinking), corporate memoranda¹⁰ (interesting for insights into factors that were of particular interest to the company), advertisements¹¹ (showing how the company imaged itself and its employees), and corporate films and a vast photographic library¹² (for gaining insights into who is privileged

and who is marginalized by corporate leaders and editors).

Histories:

The existence of published histories can help the researcher to gain insights into the chosen organization, people, and or/phenomena but can also provide extensive information into the available sources of information to be found. Our research into histories of Pan American Airways not only led us to the Pan American World Airways Collection at the University of Miami but also to the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum as well as the British Airways Archives and Museum, which contain a number of documents on relationships between Pan Am and British Airways. We would note that while this collection of ‘information’ is similar to a modernist approach, the ultimate difference lies in what material is being collected (e.g. evidence of dominant discourses versus fact) and how it is analyzed. Our framework at the time drew on postmodernism.

These sources will not only help you to decide what it is possible to focus on but in all likelihood, they will shape the direction you go in. Esterberg (2002, p.130) suggests that such histories and debates around the subject can help you ‘to conceptualize your study and figure out what the main controversies are’. On the other hand, existing histories may appear to limit what you can study. British Airways histories, for example, say little or nothing on gender and colonial relations. That may be an indication of what is potentially missing from the archives and/or the time needed to be spent searching the archives. This will shape the focus on your study and the types of documents you will need to spend more time on. In our study of British Airways, we had to spend a considerable time looking for accounts of female members of staff and the role they played in the airline. The problem is exacerbated where there are no available archival sources or they are spread out across a number of places.

- Consult specific companies and organizational members, archival source lists, and existing histories to assess your ability to study the topic in hand.
- Begin your archival research by reading 'what other historians and social scientists have said about the topic' (Esterberg, 2002, p. 130).

Access

These sources are only the beginning of the process. Access is a crucial issue. You may know where to look, but you need to check what is accessible and what isn't. Not all archives are open to the public, and where they are, some of the materials may not be accessible (Berg, 1989; Lipartito, 2014). An example of the former is where we attempted to gain access to the archives of United Airlines (UA). Our study of Air Canada indicated that UA had played a role in training Air Canada's flight attendants in 1937. In our request to visit the UA archives, we were referred to the online part of the archive, which contained very limited (and carefully crafted) material, and to a recent corporate history (Garvey & Fisher, 2002), which gave no clues to the material we were seeking. An example of the latter problem is detailed by Rostis (2015) who was attempting to study the role of the Biafran War (1967–70) in the development and role of humanitarian agencies in Africa, only to find that the International Red Cross restricted access to those files. Rostis resorted to newspaper reports of the time, but we have been unable as yet to gain information on the early role of UA in the development of Air Canada.

- Check access to selected archives and the availability of related histories in advance of developing a specific focus.

Collection and Storage

Having found your way to an archive, there are a number of considerations to take into

account that affect what you find and how you make sense of it. Berg (1989) distinguishes between those archives (usually public) where the documents have been developed for 'the express purpose of the examination of others' (p. 86) and those (private) archives that were not developed for public engagement. While the latter may take on a range of peculiar forms according to the needs of the person(s) establishing them, the former have usually been ordered in a particular way to assist researchers to find certain materials. This may be quite systematic as in the case of the National Archives of Canada or they may be placed in a rough order such as the Pan American collection, where materials are boxed together in broad categories (e.g. 'interviews and biographies', 'China', etc.). Either way, what is collected and how it is ordered can greatly affect the material that you manage to find and what sense you make of it. Webb et al. (1984) contend that there are at least 'two major sources of bias in archival records – how they are collected and how they survive' (p. 114). According to Stan (2010, p. 29) researchers need to 'be aware that not all archives were systematically collected [and may not] include many relevant documents, either because these documents were destroyed intentionally or accidentally or because they were scattered among other archives collections'. The Pan Am collection, for example, for many years consisted of just over 600 boxes of material, but this changed dramatically on, what was to be, our last day of research at the collection when another 900 boxes were added to the collection. The additional boxes, we were informed, were culled from tens of thousands of boxes discovered in a warehouse in New York.¹³ Addressing the issue of what does and does not get collected, Schwarzkopf (2012) argues that 'archives reinforce survivorship bias [with large] and dominant companies often [having] better archives' than smaller companies (p. 7). He also goes on to argue that there is a European bias in the establishment of

archives 'because it is only within the global north and the west that this institutional support is so widely available that local and national authorities and firms themselves can afford to preserve company records' (p. 5). In summary, Schwarzkopf (2012) argues that 'archives are not just sites for the passive collection of records from the past. Rather, archives are very active in both enabling and limiting what we see, know, understand, and accept as real' (p. 9). He goes on not only to warn researchers about the in-built biases of archives but also for 'an open theoretical debate about the epistemological status of the archive in business history' (p. 2).

- Researchers need to be aware of the influence of archives through the establishment, selection, and ordering processes involved.
- A process of reflection of the influence of the archive should be encouraged.

Evaluation

Scott (1990) argues that four criteria should be used to evaluate documents – authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning (cited in Myers, 2009, p. 159).

Authenticity refers to whether the document is what it claims to be. The most high profile example is a document called *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, published in the early part of the twentieth century, which was claimed to be a Jewish plan for world domination. The document was eventually proven to be a forgery but not before carmaker Henry Ford published half a million copies in 1920 in an attempt to spread anti-Semitism.

Credibility refers to the extent to which the author of a document is believable in what they are claiming. For example, in 1950, United States Senator Joseph McCarthy constantly referred to documents in his possession that proved that there were over 200 known communists working in the State Department. He was later to claim that there

were communists in the U.S. military. None of these claims was ever authenticated and McCarthy became known in some quarters as self-serving and prone to exaggeration (Caute, 1979).

Representativeness refers to the extent to which any single document can be taken as evidence of a particular phenomenon. For example, in our research in the Academy of Management archives we found a letter to Keith Davis (AoM President, 1964) from Max Schmoor, in which he, Schmoor, states that 'I too hope that Goldwater or someone similar in philosophy does get to be VP or pres. Next time around' (Schmoor, 1961). Given the usually liberal character of Davis and his importance in the field of business studies at the time, we searched for other documentation to corroborate his support for right-wing Senator Barry Goldwater and other right-wing causes. Finding none, we did not pursue the matter further.

Meaning, in this case, refers to the extent to which a document can be clearly understood. For example, some of the phrasing may not be clear. In the letter from Schmoor to Davis, discussed above, for example, it is possible that Schmoor is not referring to Davis' political preferences but rather responding to an earlier comment by Davis that distances him from Goldwater supporters. Context can also be critical in making sense of what was meant by a person at a given time. For example, if you were trying to evaluate the 1944 Hollywood movie *Song of Russia*, you would need to take into account the time and context of the film when the Soviet Union was seen by many as the heroic ally of the United States. Viewed in the context of McCarthyism in the 1950s, it was seen by many as an attempt by communists to infiltrate the cultural understandings and values of Americans (Caute, 1979). Similarly, research activities and stances taken by some university professors were viewed as progressive in the 1930s and 1940s, but then viewed as treasonous in the 1950s (Schrecker, 1986). Abraham Maslow, for one, came under suspicion by the Federal

Bureau of Investigation (Cooke & Mills, 2008). Esterberg (2002) adds that in the evaluation of sources we also need to take into account the biases and predilections of the author as well as his or her overall viewpoint, the kinds of evidence they use, and the extent to which they are credible.

- To evaluate archival documents, look for:
Authenticity
Credibility
Representativeness
Meaning

Evidentiary Value

George and Bennett (2005) raise questions about how to judge the worth or evidentiary value of documents. They argue that ‘scholars are not immune from the general tendency to attach particular significance to an item that supports their pre-existing or favored interpretation and, conversely, to downplay the significance of an item that challenges it’ (p. 99). Thus, they advise, we need to be ‘prepared to revise existing interpretations when new evidence and compelling new interpretations emerge’ (ibid.). In order to do this, they continue, archival documents need to be regarded ‘as a type of purposeful communication’ and as such analyzed for what is being communicated, and ‘*who* is speaking to *whom*, for *what purpose* and *under what circumstances*’ (pp. 99–100, original emphasis). For example, when Pan Am’s corporate leadership attempted to hire a professional historian to write a history of the company, they were turned down by a number of respected scholars who balked at the idea of a history geared to lionizing the role of Juan Trippe, the airline’s chief executive. Eventually they turned to crime fiction writer Robert Daley who was willing to write a corporate history. Thus, when reading Daley’s history of Pan Am – *American Saga. Juan Trippe and His Pan Am Empire* (Daley, 1980) – we need to take into account the

various influences on the author, the author’s ability/training to write a history; his (financial) reasons for writing the book and the circumstances surrounding his appointment (Durepos et al., 2008). This may not mean that it is a flawed history, but it does raise questions about how it was developed. For instance, when reading the subsequent book, we need to take into account that after approaching a number of historians to write a corporate history of Pan American Airways the airline’s leadership settled on detective fiction writer Robert Daley.

- Judge the evidentiary value of documents based on an analysis of who wrote it, for whom, under what circumstances, and in the context of its production.

Triangulation

Triangulation refers to the research strategy of ensuring that you don’t rely on just one source of data. It is used in journalism all the time to ensure that the authenticity of a story does not rely on a single source. According to Berg (1989, pp. 97–8) it is ‘particularly important to use multiple procedures (triangulation) when working with archival data to reduce possible sources of error (missing data and so on)’. We came across this problem recently when we were trying to understand the influence of the British Airways’ (BA) archives on extant histories of the company. We began by asking the BA archive staff, consisting largely of retired employee volunteers, when the archive was established. The various responses we got indicated that there were several conflicting answers and most did not know the answer. We then returned to the archive at a later date and searched through in-house newsletters for some kind of definitive answer. Again, there was some confusion so, in an iterative process, we used the written information to review with the volunteers what made more sense to them (Coller et al., 2015).

- Use multiple procedures (triangulation) when working with archival data to reduce possible sources of error.

POSTMODERNS AND AMODERNS IN THE ARCHIVE

To contrast the modernist with postmodern and amodern approaches, we will revisit some of the issues raised above.

Postmodernism

Earlier we defined postmodernism as ‘a critique of modernist representation, specifically the idea that concepts mirror reality, arguing that representations provide at best partial perspectives on their objects ... and the cognition proceeds through representation that is mediated by language and historicity’ (Linstead, 2010, p. 694). In terms of specifically archival research, this means that the postmodernist occupies an apparently paradoxical role that is linked through a critique of language use. On the one hand, the postmodernist seeks to understand the character, location, and context of powerful discourses. Foucault, for example, looked for traces of constructs such as madness, discipline, or sexuality in multiple places (Rostis, 2015). On the other hand, postmodernists are harsh critics of (realist understandings of) the archive. White (2004, p. 198), for example, characterizes the modernist approach to the archive as a voyage of discovery whereby, through the uncovering of a series of facts, sources, or traces a history emerges (or at least that is the hope). He then asks us, from a postmodernist perspective, to imagine a completed history: ‘Here you will find in it things that are in no conceivable archive: a story, an emplotment, a narrative structure, tropological figurings, foregrounding or backgrounding arguments, and the positional and positional thesis’ (ibid.). In other words,

what the modernist has deigned to discover is in fact a self-imposed story on a group of disparate words read as facts. In the end, the postmodernist adopts a relativist approach to the archive, arguing that there are numerous possibilities for reading into the ‘traces’, including explorations and exampling of powerful discourses.

From this perspective *written histories* are viewed not as more-or-less factual accounts but as *archives*, that contribute to discursive views of the world. The histories of BA, for example, arguably contribute to a gendered discourse of inequality. The *collection and storage* of archival materials are examined for the way they order knowledge, i.e. influence discursive understanding of the materials contained therein. The chronological arrangement of BA’s museum artifacts, for example, serves to construct a narrative of technological and ownership progression that privileges private over public ownership and marginalizes the role of women in the company.¹⁴ *Authenticity* of a document matters less than its potential impact. In the case of Henry Ford’s reproduction and distribution of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, its impact on anti-Semitism is likely of more importance than whether it was a forgery or not. Its forged character is more likely to raise questions about how discourses are shaped than whether the document can be trusted as authentic. Similarly, the postmodernist may be less interested in whether the author of a document can be trusted in their account as much as whether their account is influential regardless. Senator McCarthy’s lists of communists may have been bogus, but the very nature of his claims and the way in which he presented them made his name into a socio-political phenomenon viz. McCarthyism. Representativeness and triangulation may be the two areas where the postmodernist and modernism come closest as both are usually looking for phenomena that can be claimed to have some socio-political impact at some level or other. And both are looking for other sources to help them develop

plausible accounts of a particular phenomenon. Nonetheless, the meanings imbued in each term do differ considerably between the two approaches. Which bring us to the issue of a document's meaning. While the modernist is trying to get to the truth of what someone says through cognitive means, the postmodernist seeks to gain insights on how meanings are produced (rather than influenced) by the context in which they appear and in the context in which they are being read. Finally, in terms of evidentiary evidence, modernists, such as George and Bennett (see earlier) stress cognitive processes of addressing bias, as if the world of ideas and practices were rooted in discernible facts. The postmodernist, on the other hand, would be more interested in how interpretations were rooted in discursive notions of reality.

Amodernism

Amodernism is a conceptual stance that shares much of postmodernism's critique of modernism. However, although it 'shifts our focus away from the modernist necessity for accurate representations of reality (realism)', it also shifts focus away from 'the relativist nature of a reality mediated through knowledge and text (the anti-realism of the textual turn)', focusing instead on 'practices' (Durepos, 2015, p. 169). This means 'tracing the many shapes that human–non-human associations make when engaged in activity' (ibid.). Thus, if history-making 'is an everyday practice ... why not study the various compositions it takes in its situated practices?' (ibid.). In simple terms, amodernism seeks to understand how histories are produced rather than made. The latter, modernist idea, suggests that histories (more-or-less accurately) describe the activities of real people and events over time. The former, amodernist idea, suggests that ideas about people and events are shaped through a series of relationships between people and things. Those relationships can include historians,

history books, conferences, but also a series of activities involving a variety of people. Thus, unlike modernists, history is not made, it is socially constructed; and unlike postmodernists, history is not simply mediated by historians, but rather by a host of human and non-human actors of whom the historian may be one. This approach simultaneously dismantles the idea of history as a real and truthful account of the past while recognizing its value as an outcome of human–non-human relationships. We don't have to believe in Santa Claus to recognize the value of the phenomenon.

How does this play out in the archives? Essentially the idea is to attempt to reassemble any given history to see how it is produced. This entails trying to gather insights into what, how, and when something (some sense of history) was produced. To that end, amodernists try to follow the actors involved to see how something was produced and came to be an accepted account.

From this perspective, written histories are an interesting starting point in their own right but also in providing clues to some of the potential actors and events to be followed through archival documents. Robert Daley's (1980) history of Pan Am, for example, masks the various relationships that went into its making (Durepos et al., 2008). On the surface, it is a series of historical facts brought together by the author as historian. Through that process, the book performs as a history because we have no reason to question the voracity of the details. On further examination, through archival research, the making of the book involved a series of senior managers who set out to commission a particular history of the airline, based on a series of selectively collected artifacts and documents, and a desire to avoid a more critical history that was published four decades earlier. For the amodernist, the collection, storage, and ordering of the archive are important actors in influencing what gets to count as history. What you cannot find in an archive is just as important as what you can find and perhaps

more so. Authenticity is more interesting as a process whereby an actor becomes involved in a process and is enrolled (i.e. accepts the truth or sense of something). A forged document is no less an actor than an authentic document. Both can influence the production of a history. Representativeness is less important in amodernist research or at least it takes on a different meaning. The issue is not whether a single account is reproduced elsewhere, so much as the influence that the related actor plays in the production of an account. Thus, while the modernist is looking for corroborating evidence, the amodernist is looking at how/whether the actor appears to have influenced some level of relational activity. In regard to meaning, the amodernist tries to assess not what the author means so much as how is a particular meaning produced and what type of activity helped to produce a given meaning. The same is the case with credibility. For the modernist, it is a question of the value of a document if the author is not deemed credible. For the amodernist, the question would be whether or how something becomes accepted as credible. Just what is it that Senator McCarthy did to get some of his flawed ideas across? For the amodernist, evidentiary value does not reside in an appraisal of the words and expressions of an author so much as understanding how it works as a matter of influence on other actors. Finally, for amodernists, triangulation, although it has different meanings from those intended by modernists, involves looking for different sources to assess the influence of selected actors on particular outcomes (i.e. historical accounts).

ENDPOINT: THE SILENCE OF THE ARCHIVES

In this entry, we have tried to show the value of archival research and the varying ways that different research traditions approach it. We have tried to indicate, through various examples, some of the gendered and racialized

issues involved in the construction and ordering of archives – its European bias as Schwarzkopf (2012) terms it. But it is more than that. The problem facing all three approaches discussed is fundamentally the issue of collection and storage. As a number of feminists (J. W. Scott, 1987) and postcolonialists (Ibarra-Colado, 2006) have pointed out, archives are often silent on the role of women and formerly colonized people. To that end, we conclude with a paradoxical plea for more archival studies that address what Decker (2013) calls ‘the silence of the archives’ and a reappraisal of the Western bias inherent in the value placed on archives.

Notes

- 1 At times, we move between postmodernist and amodernist accounts as we explore not only the impact of powerful discourses on people (postmodernist) but also on the network of relations (amodernist) associated with the production of a particular discourse.
- 2 There are debates within the literature around the difference between postmodernism and poststructuralism, with some authors viewing postmodernism as an umbrella term that also includes poststructuralism and others distinguishing between them based on methodological approach (see P. Prasad, 2005). For the purpose of this chapter we use the umbrella term, drawing on Linstead (2010, p. 694) who defines postmodernism as ‘critique of modernist representation, specifically the idea that concepts mirror reality, arguing that representations provide at best partial perspectives on their objects ... and the cognition proceeds through representation that is mediated by language and historicity’.
- 3 Hartt (2013) refers to non-corporeal actants as phenomena that are non-physical in nature (e.g. stories, values, traditions, memories, and even histories) but yet can influence human actors.
- 4 The Air Canada archives are housed at the Canada Aviation and Space Museum in Ottawa.
- 5 The date of British Airways’ establishment is not without contestation (see Collier et al., 2015).
- 6 For example, between 1919–24 the airline hired less than a handful of women, and this reflected a dominant mindset about the role of women. However, between 1924–39 women constituted 10 percent of the airline’s employees and reflected a changing mindset about women’s role.

- 7 Although actor–network theorists have been undertaking amodernist research since the late 1970s, the great majority of this has revolved around ethnographic research of on-going activities – see, for example, Latour and Woolgar (1979).
- 8 See special issue 7, 3–4, 2008 of *Management & Organizational History* on company magazines and in-house newsletters.
- 9 For interesting work on annual reports, see Benschop and Meihuizen (2002), Tinker and Neimark (1987), and Burrell (1987).
- 10 An interesting account of the use of corporate memoranda can be found in A. Prasad and Mir (2002).
- 11 For work on ‘reading’ and analyzing advertisements, see Alvesson (1998).
- 12 For work on photographic and film analysis see Warren (2002) and Bezner (1999).
- 13 On the problems of archival storage and the challenge of information/knowledge, see Burke (2012).
- 14 A relatively large collection of female mannequins in flight attendant uniforms suggests that this was women’s major role in the airline.

REFERENCES

- Alvesson, M. (1998). Gender Relations and Identity at Work: A Case Study of Masculinities and Femininities in an Advertising Agency. *Human Relations*, 51(8), 969–1005.
- Barry, K. M. (2007). *Femininity in Flight. A History of Flight Attendants*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Benschop, Y., & Meihuizen, H. E. (2002). Reporting Gender: Representations of Gender in Financial and Annual Reports. In I. Aaltio & A. J. Mills (Eds.), *Gender, Identity and the Culture of Organizations* (pp. 160–84). London: Routledge.
- Berg, B. L. (1989). *Qualitative Research Methods*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bezner, L. C. (1999). *Photography and Politics in America: From the New Deal into the Cold War*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Booth, C., & Rowlinson, M. (2006). Management and Organizational History: Prospects. *Management & Organizational History*, 1(1), 5–30.
- Bowden, B., & Lamond, D. (Eds.). (2015). *Management History. Its Global Past and Present*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc.
- Bruce, K. (2006). Henry S. Dennison, Elton Mayo, and Human Relations Historiography. *Management & Organizational History*, 1(2), 177–99.
- Bruce, K., & Nyland, C. (2011). Elton Mayo and the Deification of Human Relations. *Organization Studies*, 32(3), 383–405.
- Bryman, A., Bell, E., Mills, A. J., & Yue, A. R. (2011). *Business Research Methods. First Canadian Edition*. Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.
- Burke, P. (2012). *A Social History of Knowledge. Volume II from the Encyclopédie to Wikipedia*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Burrell, G. (1987). No Accounting for Sexuality. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 12(1), 89–101.
- Caute, D. (1979). *The Great Fear. The Anti-Communist Purge Under Truman and Eisenhower*. New York: Touchstone.
- Coller, K. E., Helms Mills, J., & Mills, A. J. (2015). The British Airways Heritage Collection: An Ethnographic ‘History’. *Business History*, 58(4), 547–70.
- Cooke, B., & Mills, A. J. (2008). The Right to Be Human and Human Rights: Maslow, McCarthyism and the Death of Humanist Theories of Management. *Management & Organizational History*, 3(1), 27–47.
- Daley, R. (1980). *An American Saga. Juan Trippe and His Pan Am Empire*. New York: Random House.
- Decker, S. (2013). The Silence of the Archives: Business History, Post-Colonialism and Archival Ethnography. *Management & Organizational History*, 8(2), 155–73.
- Durepos, G. (2015). ANTi-History: Toward Amodern Histories. In P. Genoe McLaren, A. J. Mills, & T. G. Weatherbee (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Management and Organizational History* (pp. 153–80). London: Routledge.
- Durepos, G., Helms Mills, J., & Mills, A. J. (2008). Tales in the Manufacture of Knowledge: Writing a Company History of Pan American World Airways. *Management & Organizational History*, 3(1), 63–80.
- Durepos, G., & Mills, A. J. (2012). *ANTi-History: Theorizing the Past, History, and Historiography in Management and Organizational*

- Studies*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Elton, G. R. (1967). *The Practice of History*. London: Methuen.
- Elton, G. R. (1969). *The Practice of History*. London: Fontana.
- Elton, G. R. (1991). *Return to Essentials: Some Reflections on the Present State of Historical Study*. Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Esterberg, K. G. (2002). *Qualitative Methods in Social Research*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.
- Flynn, T. (1996). Foucault's Mapping of History. In G. Gutting (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (pp. 28–46). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Foster, J., & Sheppard, J. (1989). *British Archives: A Guide to Archive Resources in the United Kingdom* (2nd ed.). London: Macmillan.
- Garvey, W., & Fisher, D. (2002). *The Age of Flight. A History of America's Pioneering Airline*. Greensboro, NC: Pace.
- George, A. L., & Bennett, A. (2005). *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- George, C. S. (1968). *The History of Management Thought*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Hartt, C. M. (2013). Actants without Actors: Polydimensional Discussion of a Regional Conference. *Tamara: Journal for Critical Organization Inquiry*, 11(3), 15–25.
- Hartt, C. M., Mills, A. J., Helms Mills, J., & Corrigan, L. T. (2014). Sense-Making and Actor Networks: The Non-Corporeal Actant and the Making of an Air Canada History. *Management & Organizational History*, 9(3), 288–304.
- Ibarra-Colado, E. (2006). Organization Studies and Epistemic Coloniality in Latin America: Thinking Otherness from the Margins. *Organization*, 13(4), 463–88.
- Jacques, R. (1996). *Manufacturing the Employee: Management Knowledge from the 19th to 21st Centuries*. London: Sage.
- Jenkins, K. (1991). *Re-Thinking History*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Jenkins, K. (1995). *On 'What is History?': From Carr and Elton to Rorty and White*. London: Routledge.
- Kieser, A. (1994). Why Organizational Theory Needs Historical Analyses: And How This Should Be Performed. *Organization Science*, 5(4), 608–20.
- Latour, B., & Woolgar, S. (1979). *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Linstead, S. (2010). Postmodernism. In A. J. Mills, G. Durepos, & E. Wiebe (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research* (Vol. II, pp. 694–701). London: Sage.
- Lipartito, K. (2014). Historical Sources and Data. In M. Bucheli & R. D. Wadhvani (Eds.), *Organizations in Time. History, Theory and Methods* (pp. 284–304). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- May, T. (2006). *The Philosophy of Foucault*. Toronto, ON: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- McHoul, A., & Grace, W. (2003). *A Foucault Primer. Discourse, Power and the Subject*. New York: New York University Press.
- McKinlay, A. (2013). Following Foucault into the Archives: Clerks, Careers and Cartoons. *Management & Organizational History*, 8(2), 137–54.
- Mills, A. J. (1995). Man/aging Subjectivity, Silencing Diversity: Organizational Imagery in the Airline Industry – The Case of British Airways. *Organization*, 2(2), 243–69.
- Mills, A. J. (2006). Sex, Strategy and the Stratosphere: Airlines and the Gendering of Organizational Culture. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mills, A. J. (2010). Juncture. In A. J. Mills, G. Durepos, & E. Weibe (Eds.), *Sage Encyclopedia of Case Study Research* (pp. 509–11). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mills, A. J., & Helms Mills, J. (2011). Digging Archeology: Postpositivist Theory and Archival Research in Case Study Development. In R. Piekkari & C. Welch (Eds.), *Rethinking the Case Study in International Business Research* (pp. 342–60). Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Munslow, A. (2010). *The Future of History*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Myers, M. D. (2009). *Qualitative Research in Business & Management*. London: Sage.
- Myrick, K., Helms Mills, J., & Mills, A. J. (2013). History-Making and the Academy of Management: An AntiHistory Perspective. *Management & Organizational History*, 8(4), 345–70.
- Penrose, H. (1980). *Wings Across the World. An Illustrated History of British Airways*. London: Cassell Ltd.

- Prasad, A., & Mir, R. (2002). Digging Deep for Meaning: A Critical Hermeneutic Analysis of CEO Letters to Shareholders in the Oil Industry. *Journal of Business Communication*, 39(1), 92–116.
- Prasad, P. (2005). *Crafting Qualitative Research. Working in the Postpositivist Traditions*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Rostis, A. (2015). *Organizing Disaster: The Construction of Humanitarianism*. Bingley, UK: Emerald Books.
- Rowlinson, M. (2004). Historical Perspectives in Organization Studies: Factual, Narrative, and Archeo-Genealogical. In D. E. Hodgson & C. Carter (Eds.), *Management Knowledge and The New Employee* (pp. 8–20). Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company.
- Rowlinson, M., Hassard, J., & Decker, S. (2014). Research Strategies for Organizational History: A Dialogue between Historical Theory and Organizational History. *Academy of Management Review*, 39(3), 250–74.
- Schmoor, M. C. (1961, August 13). *Letter to Keith Davis*. Academy of Management Archives in the Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation and Archives, Martin P. Catherwood Library, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.
- Schrecker, E. (1986). *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism & the Universities*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schwarzkopf, S. (2012). What Is an Archive: And Where Is It? – Why Business Historians Need a Constructive Theory of the Archive. *Business Archives*, 105(11), 1–9.
- Scott, J. (1990). *A Matter of Record: Documentary Sources in Social Research*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Scott, J. W. (1987). Rewriting History. In M. R. Higonnet, J. Jenson, S. Michel, & M. C. Weitz (Eds.), *Between the Lines. Gender and the Two World Wars*. London: Yale University Press.
- Shenhav, Y., & Weitz, E. (2000). The Roots of Uncertainty in Organization Theory: A Historical Constructivist Analysis. *Organization*, 7(3), 373–401.
- Stan, L. (2010). Archival Records as Evidence. In A. J. Mills, G. Durepos, & E. Weibe (Eds.), *SAGE Encyclopedia of Case Study Research* (pp. 29–31). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Taylor, S., Bell, E., & Cooke, B. (2009). Business History and the Historiographical Operation. *Management & Organizational History*, 4(2), 151–66.
- Tinker, T., & Neimark, M. (1987). The Role of Annual Reports in Gender and Class Contradictions at General Motors 1917–1976. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 12(1), 71–88.
- Toms, S., & Wilson, J. (2010). In Defence of Business History: A Reply to Taylor, Bell and Cooke. *Management & Organizational History*, 5(1), 109–120.
- Urwick, L. (1938). The Development of Scientific Management in Great Britain. A Report Distributed to Members of the Seventh International Management Congress, 1938, London. *British Management Review*, III(4), reprinted as a separate booklet.
- Warren, S. (2002). Show Me How It Feels to Work Here: Using Photography to Research Organizational Aesthetics. *Ephemera: Critical Dialogues on Organization*, 2(3), 224–45.
- Webb, E. J., Campbell, D. T., Schwartz, R. D., & Sechrest, L. (1984). The Use of Archival Sources in Social Research. In M. Bulmer (Ed.), *Sociological Research Methods* (pp. 113–30). London: Macmillan.
- White, H. (2004). Figural Realism: Studies in the Mimesis Effect. In K. Jenkins & A. Munslow (Eds.), *The Nature of History Reader* (pp. 197–214). London: Routledge.
- Wrege, C. D. (1986). The Inception, Early Struggles, and Flowering of the Academy of Management. In D. A. Wren & J. A. Pierce II (Eds.), *Papers Dedicated to the Development of Modern Management* (pp. 78–88). Chicago, IL: Academy of Management.
- Wren, D. A. (2005). *The History of Management Thought*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Yano, C. R. (2011). *Airborne Dreams: 'Nisei' Stewardesses and Pan American World Airways*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Rhetoric

Peter Hamilton

INTRODUCTION

The last few decades have heard calls for the need to research talk and text within the workplace (Boden, 1994; Cameron, 2000). This has resulted in on-going research projects that have adopted different approaches to how they relate to a variety of organizational processes and practices. These approaches include discourse analysis (Oswick, 2012), conversational analysis (Greatbatch & Clark, 2012) and rhetoric (Conrad, 2011). This chapter is focused on rhetoric and provides a broad overview of issues that relate to qualitative research on organizational rhetoric.

Although rhetoric has a strong historical association with persuasion (Herrick, 2001) definitions are both more subtle and varied. For example, Aristotle's (1991) *Art of Rhetoric*, considered by some to be the pre-eminent text on rhetoric (Golden et al., 1997), defines it as '*the detection of the persuasive aspects of each matter*' (Aristotle, 1991,

pp. 69–70, original italics). In that sense rhetoric concerns what resources, such as the most appropriate arguments or language style, to use in light of the particular situation in which a speaker seeks to persuade an audience. An alternative definition from the classical period by Quintilian defines rhetoric as 'the science of speaking well' (Williams, 2009, p. 398). In developing the view that the ideal orator was 'the good man [sic] speaking well' (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990, p. 35) Quintilian stresses a moral character to the orator who should also seek to benefit society. More contemporaneously, Kenneth Burke, a major figure in twentieth-century rhetoric, contends that rhetoric is the use of symbols in order to shape and alter both humans and their context. Burke also supplements the traditional focus on persuasion through his concept of identification (Foss et al., 2002). Identification is seen in his comment that, 'You persuade a man [sic] only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your ways

with his' (Burke, 1969: 55, original italics). Attaining identification can be the catalyst to attitudinal or behavioural change. Finally, the literary scholar Wayne Booth (2004) identifies rhetoric as the production or reduction of misunderstanding and defines it as 'the entire range of resources that human beings share for producing effects on one another' (Booth, 2004, p. xi). These effects could be ethical, practical, emotional and intellectual. In their various ways, these definitions posit rhetoric as the deployment of symbols aimed, for example, at convincing, influencing or pleasing an audience in order to advance a point of view.

In an organizational context rhetoric has a central role for a number of reasons. For example, many organizations engage in public relations, recruit workers, develop advertising campaigns, seek investment, sell things, lobby government, negotiate with trade unions and so on. Rhetoric is also argued to be a key facet of leadership (Conger, 1998). Rhetoric therefore plays a central role whenever an organization seeks to convince, influence or please an audience(s) through the use of symbols (Hoffman & Ford, 2010). This highlights two distinct characteristics of rhetoric: it is contingent and strategic (Keith & Lundberg, 2008). The former refers to a reliance on audiences whose uniqueness and predispositions mean that they may or may not be persuaded. The latter refers to the need for a speaker to think about the substance and form of a message in order to achieve a positive audience response. While rhetoric as a practice is about how things can get done through the uses of various discursive resources, it is however also a means of analysing such practices. As Martin puts it, rhetoric is 'both a mode of enquiry and the object of that enquiry' (2014, p. 2). The subject and object of rhetoric are therefore not wholly inseparable as we can study rhetoric in order to learn persuasive skills or we can examine the persuasive aspect of a discourse. In the latter sense, we can therefore rhetorically analyse an organization's public

relations message or advertising campaign in order to examine 'its' rhetoric. This could include analysis of the argument strategies, the use of figures of speech and any visual imagery, as well as the intent and purposes of such organizational rhetoric. In this chapter, the primary focus is the persuasive aspect of a discourse, what Andrews describes as 'the art behind choices in communication of all kinds' (2014, p. xi).

The chapter's focus on rhetoric can be understood within the context of what has been called the 'recovery of rhetoric' (Roberts & Good, 1993) or 'the rhetorical turn' (Simons, 1990), whereby over the last few decades there has been a growing interest in rhetoric within the social sciences (Cohen, 1994; Leff, 1987; Myers, 1989). This 'recovery' or 'rhetorical turn' is also evident within business and management as there is now an impressive body of work that has focused upon organizational rhetoric and conducted rhetorical analysis on a variety of organizational processes and practices (Hartelius & Browning, 2008). However, while it is nearly three decades since Simons was able to 'present news of the "rhetorical turn"' (1989, p. 1), we remain within an intellectual context in which a pejorative perspective towards rhetoric arguably remains dominant. In this chapter, we therefore begin by initially discussing the dominant pejorative understanding of rhetoric. The discussion then proceeds to position rhetoric as a means of critical analysis rather than a shorthand for obfuscation. It then proceeds to discuss rhetoric within the context of qualitative research, both as a focus of research and as a method of critique and analysis which can aid our understanding of the rhetorical discourses that pervade and construct contemporary workplaces.

RHETORIC'S PLATONIC HANGOVER

In relation to rhetoric, Alfred Whitehead's dictum that Western thought was but 'a series

of footnotes to Plato' (Honderich, 1995, p. 284) reminds us that any discussion of rhetoric needs initially to be placed within the context of Plato's early critique in dialogues such as *Gorgias* (1994) and *Protagoras* (1956). There Plato advances his arguments that rhetoric lacks substance and equates to manipulation, obfuscation and deception, a critique that has left a lasting impression on how rhetoric is understood both in the popular imagination and in much academic discourse. For example, as Corbett and Connors write, 'all the derogatory things that men [sic] have said about this art down through the ages have their root in Plato's strictures' (1999, p. 492).

Plato's strictures in part relate to his charge that rhetoric as a form of public address is tainted by flattery and corruption (Vickers, 1988) since those engaged in rhetoric could, through the power of persuasion, sway an audience towards believing that the weaker argument was the stronger. The focus of rhetoric on the contingent and indeterminate, as exemplified in the political or legal arenas, also contrasted with a Platonic theory of knowledge that was based around universal essences and truths (Cunningham, 1991). Plato therefore views rhetoric as form without content, and having no inherent linkage to truth and virtue. This perspective is still evident in much contemporary popular discourse that uses the term solely in a pejorative manner, for example, when referring to a politician's talk as rhetoric. Rhetoric is therefore often preceded by such adjectives as 'mere' and 'empty', or there is 'a typical semantic pattern in which "rhetoric" is equated with hypocrisy or falsehood, and reality with "truth"' (Charteris-Black, 2014, p. 3).

The 'Rhetoric and Reality' of Research

This semantic pattern, which has important research implications, is common across the social sciences. We see the instances of it in Table 4.1, which indicates the number of entries on the *Web of Science* database that have the phrases or terms 'rhetoric and reality', 'rhetoric or reality', or the individual terms 'rhetoric' and 'reality' in their title. While rudimentary it does show a continuing and upward usage of the phrases and terms.

These phrases/terms are used across a range of fields that include law, politics, social policy, education studies, international development, health studies and religious studies. One possible explanation for the increased use of these terms could be the impact of a neo-liberal discourse from the 1980s onwards. Against this background, writers may therefore be interested in contrasting the claims, the rhetoric, with how they materialize in practice, the reality. In that context, it is unsurprising that this Platonic semantic pattern that treats rhetoric as lacking substance when compared to the 'truth' of what is actually happening is evident in numerous research papers on business and management. For example, in the area of human resource management (HRM) writers have distinguished between the notion of 'soft' and 'hard' HRM (Storey, 1995). These are often aligned with 'rhetoric' and 'reality', whereby the literature often implicitly or explicitly equates 'soft' HRM with rhetoric, while 'hard' HRM is equated to reality. In simple terms, if a manager expresses the value of employees and extols the virtues

Table 4.1 Instances of terms rhetoric and/or reality in article titles

	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010–15
'Rhetoric and reality'	4	20	65	133	171	115
'Rhetoric or reality'	0	5	20	21	38	19
'Rhetoric' / 'Reality'	6	42	151	256	311	185

Source: Web of Science 10 December 2015

of their high trust employment relationship, this is likely to be labelled as the 'rhetoric' of 'soft' HRM. The 'reality', the outcome of the researcher's detached inquiry, often reports a misalignment between managerial words and actions involving various worker deprivations. We saw this made explicit in Truss et al.'s (1997) early appraisal of the 'hard' and 'soft' models of HRM whereby they explicitly equated 'soft' HRM with rhetoric and 'hard' HRM with reality. Their appraisal of whether management were adopting 'soft' control through commitment or 'hard' control through tight strategic control was summed up in the following passage: 'even if the rhetoric of HRM is "soft", the reality is almost always "hard", with the interests of the organization prevailing over those of the individual' (Truss et al., 1997, p. 70).

Although there have been calls to go beyond the naivety of the 'rhetoric and reality' dichotomy (Beech, 1998; Watson, 2010) referring back to Table 4.1 suggests these calls have fallen on deaf ears as use of the dichotomy has increased over the years. In recent years, for example, one of the research questions in Warner and Nankervis's paper on HRM practices in three Chinese MNCs asks 'How does their rhetoric about their HRM practices match the reality of their chosen systems and practices?' (2012, p. 64). Similarly, Razouk and Bayed make the bold claim that 'This study confirms that the SHRM [strategic human resource management] in France is reality rather than rhetoric' (2010, p. 1207). Finally, Rasche et al. in their examination of whether ethics education within MBA programmes is a case of rhetoric or reality report a gap between educational providers 'upbeat rhetoric around ethics education and their actual MBA curriculum' (2013, p. 71). We find a similar treatment of rhetoric within papers on careers (Fernando & Cohen, 2013), diversity management (Soldan & Nankervis, 2014), procurement (Flynn & Davis, 2015), operations management (Langstrand & Drotz, 2016) and new public management (McGeough, 2015). Nearly two

decades on, the treatment of rhetoric in these papers is little different to that of Truss et al.'s (1997) and conform to the point that:

In the popular 'rhetoric versus reality' style of HRM critical writing, 'rhetoric' all too often simply comes to mean 'false claims' about changes in managerial practice, claims which the researcher on 'HRM' is able to debunk by investigating the 'reality' of what is 'actually going on'. (Watson, 2004, p. 451)

Such studies tend to a view of rhetoric as manipulation and control (Hartelius & Browning, 2008). However, a problem with such a treatment of rhetoric, at least from the perspective of the 'rhetorical turn', is that although a manager may not be able to avoid using rhetoric when characterizing their employment management as positive, this does not in itself establish such talk as rhetorical. Neither would it be rhetorical if such celebratory words were established to be false. Instead such talk would be considered rhetorical were it considered an instance of strategic, instrumental discourse which sought to influence amongst other things the values, beliefs and behaviours of an audience (Gill, 1994). Therefore, whether such talk is positive, negative, true or false is not the essential characteristic of it being an instance of rhetorical discourse. The problem therefore with how 'rhetoric and reality' are typically juxtaposed is that it simply provides a Platonic account of rhetoric as, for example, bombastic, obfuscating or manipulative, reducing rhetoric only to what Booth (2004) has called 'rhetickery', rhetoric that is 'shoddy, dishonest communicative acts producing misunderstanding' (Booth, 2004, p. 11).

As noted earlier we can instead appreciate rhetoric as the use of language for purposes that can include persuasion (Aristotle, 1991), the generation of identification (Burke, 1969) and/or (mis)understanding (Booth, 2004). When adopting such a treatment of rhetoric, a manager would therefore be engaging in rhetoric whether they made claims

towards an employment strategy of commitment ('soft' HRM) or direct control ('hard' HRM). So, for example, if we were analysing the talk of Michael O'Leary, the often infamous and controversial Chief Executive of Ryanair, we would not deny he was rhetorical simply because he seems to 'tell it as it is'. When he reportedly commented that 'we all employ some lazy bastards who need a kick up the backside, but no one can bring themselves to admit it' (Hogan, 2013), the apparent absence of 'soft' HRM does not mean we would deny a use of rhetoric! As Watson writes such 'Plain speaking is simply a rhetorical alternative, not a turning away from rhetoric' (1995, p. 806). Thus, even the apparently plainest of statements carries normative assumptions and inferences which we require to deconstruct. In even the plainest of talk there is therefore no escaping rhetoric, a perspective that Grint considers self-evident when writing, 'How can an account of "reality" be provided except through rhetorical practices?' (1995, p. 157).

Of course, it might justifiably be argued that this position simply ignores how language use occurs in practice. These earlier writers are not after all replicating Humpty-Dumpty's refusal in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* to accept that you cannot simply make words mean whatever you want. Their intended meaning of the term *rhetoric* may therefore be perfectly justifiable since it can be argued that from the time of Plato's critique it has carried agreed semantic properties such as bombast, manipulation and emptiness. However, it can be retorted that this meaning ignores other long-standing semantic properties, many of which also emanate from antiquity. These include persuasion, argument, appeal, eloquence, contingency and deliberation. Thus, while the populist use of the phrase can be argued to be empirically and philosophically narrow, it also wilfully or otherwise ignores the long history of rhetorical theory and practice that has been systematized over three millennia. As Gill (1994, p. 39) summarizes

it, perspectives have been forwarded which view rhetoric as the art of persuasion, as the addition of ornamentation to language and as a truth creating mechanism that conceptualizes rhetoric in epistemological terms. The narrow, pejoratively focused use of the term also means that we potentially lose sight of important aspects of organizational processes and practices, as well as a means to analyse and understand these.

ORGANIZATIONAL RHETORIC

Although the rhetoric/reality dichotomy shows an on-going resilience, the argument of the previous section against such dichotomization can be understood in the context of Gane's claim that 'there can be no doubt ... that there is a considerable interest in the revival of rhetoric more widely across the social sciences' (1989, p. 127). For example, this revival was evident in long established and important work that adopted a rhetorical perspective within the three major social science disciplines of economics (McCloskey, 1998), sociology (Edmundson, 1984) and social psychology (Billig, 1996). In each of these texts the writers establish how their disciplines are rhetorical endeavours that can be rhetorically analysed to show how they operate as persuasive texts. These writers, while highlighting a value and utility to a rhetorical perspective at a disciplinary level, also remind us that writers need to appreciate that they cannot avoid using rhetoric in their own writing since they are attempting to persuade an audience to accept their position. How we craft and write up research is therefore an important point of consideration, which in business and management research is acknowledged by amongst others Watson (1994) and Easton and Aranjó (1997). For example, while in *In Search of Management* Watson (1994) argues that rhetoric is central to the talk of managers as they go about their search to make sense of their organizational

world, he expresses the view that the academic writer cannot escape from rhetoric. As he writes:

The book is a rhetorical product; it is a set of artfully crafted arguments in which I am trying to persuade my readers to accept the plausibility of my view of the world of management. It could not be otherwise. (Watson, 1994, p. 25)

In terms of the value and utility of rhetorical analysis to our understanding of organizational processes and practices, there is now a wealth of studies that attest to this. As with the social sciences more generally, organizational research has also been argued to have undergone a ‘linguistic turn’ (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000) and within this rhetoric has a reasonably prominent place. While this has entailed a shift towards a focus on language in a constructive and constitutive sense, and towards a reliance and support for interpretive methods, Hoffman and Ford (2010) also forward two important reasons for studying organizational rhetoric: organizations are a powerful social force that can shape our identities, ideas, beliefs and behaviours; in turn, they are major producers of rhetoric. Analysis of this abundant rhetoric is therefore important if we want to understand or challenge the strategies they deploy to influence us. For example, organizational documents constitute one resource often freely available. These could include advertisements, written strategies and policies, company constitutions, press releases, executives’ statements and various company reports. Organizational documents, both virtual and non-virtual, are therefore potentially important and useful discursive resources that can provide data for conducting rhetorical analysis. This is particularly the case when documents are viewed not as a neutral account of organizational reality or what Prior (2008, p. 824) labels ‘containers of content’, but as being capable of constituting social organization. In that sense, documents can be considered as rhetorically designed to achieve something (Bryman & Bell, 2015). For

example, McDonald et al. in their qualitative rhetorical analysis of private school prospectuses argued that ‘The rhetorical strategies evident in school prospectuses illustrate how these “organizations of interest” use rhetoric to enhance their reputation and image and to leverage advantage in a competitive neo-liberal market’ (2012, p. 14).

While many qualitative studies within business and management have used a variety of documentary sources including government reports (Brown et al., 2014), executive letters (Griffin, 2009) and mission statements (Hamilton, 2005), other studies have however used semi-structured interviews (Domajnko et al., 2011; Hamilton, 1997; Holt & Macpherson, 2010; Huang & Tansley, 2012) or naturally occurring data such as recordings of group meetings or witness transcripts (Hamilton, 1999; Lowenhaupt, 2014; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005; Whittle et al., 2008). In terms of how such rhetorical studies understand and critique such organizational rhetoric, in light of the diverse nature of the rhetorical tradition there is heterogeneity. While by no means exhaustive of the range of approaches, a number of qualitative studies focus upon Aristotle’s three rhetorical appeals of logos, pathos and ethos, while others draw on the work of particular twentieth-century rhetoricians.

Rhetorical Heterogeneity and Organizational Rhetoric

In terms of rhetorical studies that have drawn from the Aristotelian tradition we typically find qualitative studies that examine organizational processes and practices through his three rhetorical appeals of logos, pathos and ethos. The three appeals derive from the roles played in the communicative act by the text, audience and speaker. Logos refers to rhetorical appeals that are based around logic and the arguments that can be made when advancing a position. These arguments could involve the use of examples and/or what

Aristotle (1991) referred to as enthymemes. The use of examples involves a rhetorical argument based on inductive reasoning such that if something is true in a particular instance then it will be true generally. Enthymemes are typically viewed as a simpler and more everyday form of syllogism, such that a withheld premise and/or conclusion is required to be completed by the audience. For example, advertising straplines often operate on the basis of enthymemes as they require the consumer to fill in missing elements. The appeal of pathos involves the speaker or text's effect on the emotions of an audience. The intent is to elicit an audience emotion and is partly premised on the notion that our emotions affect our judgements. In essence pathos creates a mood music (Hood, 2000). Finally, ethos is based on how the audience perceives the character of the speaker and is typically generated through a narrative that seeks to show good will, good sense and strong moral character.

Qualitative studies adopting the three appeals include the work by Beason (1991) on business speeches, Hamilton (1997) on devolving payment systems, Holt and Macpherson (2010) on entrepreneurial sense-making, Brown et al. (2012) on institutional change and Heracleous and Klaering (2014) on Steve Jobs' leadership. For example, Brown et al. (2012) analyse the three appeals in their study on how the case for institutional change is made through rhetoric. The rhetorical analysis is conducted on a report advocating separate care arrangements for the young, disabled and frail elderly from the Australian Senate Committee, an issue that generated much criticism and debate. They argue such reports are implicated in power relations and at a micro-level they deploy rhetoric to persuade of their truth, plausibility, authority and verisimilitude. The central premise of the study is how rhetoric articulates institutional logics, i.e. frameworks for reason and belief. On that, they are interested in how the three appeals, 'the principal dynamics of rhetoric' (Heracleous & Klaering, 2014, p. 137),

promote specific logics. In addressing their research question, 'how does a text argue for institutional change?' (Brown et al., 2012, p. 298), their data analysis involved three stages, the third of which was an examination of the rhetorical strategies, the coding being based on the report's use of the three appeals. Coding for logos was on the basis of arguments relating to cost, efficiency or effectiveness, pathos on appeals to emotions such as individuals' fears for their future care arrangements and ethos on the basis of arguments centred around community values. Amongst other things, their analysis allowed them to show that contrary to a dominance of logos-based analysis, pathos and ethos are of greater significance than previous studies suggest. This implied that when there are shifts of dominant logics, moralizing and emotion-evoking rhetoric needs to be carefully scrutinized. More broadly their study justified a greater attention on rhetoric's role in institutional change.

While it is unsurprising that Aristotle's pre-eminence means that his work has been central to many rhetorical studies, there is also work that has drawn from more contemporary rhetoricians such as Kenneth Burke and Stephen Toulmin. For example, Walker and Monin (2001) examine a company newsletter through Burke's concept of the pentad in order to analyse an organizational event, Case (1999) draws from Burke's dramatism to analyse the rhetoric of various textual material on Business Process Re-engineering and Whittle et al. (2008) use Burke's work on rhetoric and identification to analyse a segment of naturally occurring talk in their study of rhetoric's role in organizational change. Each of these studies illustrates the potential of Burke's work to explore situational complexities, analyse the ambiguities of multivocality, demystify managerial doctrines and show the contradictory identifications that actors employ in particular situational contexts. In relation to the work of Toulmin, studies have drawn from his argument structure developed in *The Uses*

of *Argument* (Toulmin, 1958). For example, Hamilton (1999) deployed it within the context of naturally occurring talk to understand the arguments of a joint consultative committee, Peters et al. (2011) through interviews and documentary analysis to develop a framework to evaluate knowledge claims and Gold et al. (2002) through interviews assessing how incorporation of Toulmin's work into a university personal development module aided critical thinking.

Finally, a stream of research on organizational rhetoric has focused on various rhetorical tropes. Tropes involve a transference of meaning and create a deviation from the supposed proper meaning of a word(s) and rhetorically it is done in order to create an effect on an audience (Rowe, 1997). Widely used tropes include phrases such as 'surfing the web', 'getting the sack', 'let's touch base' or 'thinking outside the box'. While there is a vast array of tropes, writers such as Burke (1941) have referred to the 'four master tropes' of metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony. Metaphor involves the substitution of one thing by something different, for example, perceiving organizations as machines, prisons or brains. Metonymy substitutes an attributive or suggestive meaning for what is meant such as when the term Wall Street is used as a reductive term for the US financial system. Synecdoche involves an intra-domain representation of a part for the whole or vice versa. A part-whole synecdoche is the use of the term 'hired hands' to represent workers while a whole-part synecdoche would be 'Apple cuts 1,000 jobs' to represent the individual decision-makers. Lastly, irony involves the conveyance of a contrary meaning. We can read verbal irony in Bell Telephone's advert strapline 'sure you could live without Yellow Pages (or without newspapers or automobiles or clocks)' (Corbett & Connors, 1999, p. 406), while situational irony is apparent when there is a clear disjunction between a product and the images used to advertise it as was often seen in tobacco advertising. While Pinto's (2016)

analysis examines *The Icehotel* through each of the four master tropes, and Watson's (1995) qualitative study goes 'hunting the tropes' in a dialogue between two managers, many qualitative tropological studies often focus on a single trope. For example, Hamilton (2003), through use of semi-structured interviews, analyses how synecdoche can help us understand how employment relations are conducted, while Musson and Tietze (2004) examine metonymy through an ethnography related to talk about an organization's physical place and space. Such studies, which typically identify and analyse the trope in talk and text, help us appreciate how rhetoric's aims involve using and playing with language in part to make claims more persuasive. It also reminds us that language is not neutral, but in relation to whatever event or phenomenon are being examined, there are multiple meanings. Tropes are therefore important because their capability for transference and deviation can establish meanings that are new, creative and innovative (Keith & Lundberg, 2008). In an organizational context they are therefore part of how meaning is made and their analysis also aids our understanding of their connection to wider, institutionalized discourses (Tietze et al., 2003).

Doing Rhetorical Analysis: An Example

Following on from discussing qualitative studies on organizational rhetoric, in this part of the chapter I examine how rhetorical analysis can be conducted on naturally occurring talk within the context of industrial relations. As Whittle et al. (2008) note, naturally occurring data is particularly suited for studying organizational rhetoric. While there are potential limitations related to the quality of the audio-recording and the researcher's choices and interpretations in relation to what and how analysis is conducted, a complete and accurate recording of a real-time event can be captured. This can ensure

authenticity and a high degree of validity. Following transcription, detailed analysis of participants' rhetorical discourse is then possible. In a manner similar to Brown et al. (2012) and Heracleous and Klaering (2014), the analysis here has its roots within Aristotelian rhetoric as it rhetorically analyses text through identification of the three appeals of logos, pathos and ethos.

The piece of naturally occurring talk was recorded during fieldwork I conducted within a UK healthcare organization and involved a management and trade union pay negotiation. At the time of the negotiation the staff within the organization were either on a nationally negotiated or a locally negotiated contract of employment. The former were generally long serving staff, the latter more recently employed staff. Staff on national contracts had already received an annual pay rise and the negotiation discussed below applied only to those on a local contract. In Bitzer's (1968) terms this is a rhetorical situation, since there is an exigence or problem to be resolved and rhetoric is one means to potentially achieve resolution. It can also be considered from a rhetorical perspective since negotiation within a collective bargaining context has long been considered to involve persuasion (Martin, 1992; Singh, 1992). For example, as Kirkbride and Durcan put it 'rhetoric and argument are obviously a key part of the whole negotiation and bargaining process' (1987, p. 7).

In Aristotelian rhetoric, a pay negotiation would be illustrative of the deliberative genre of oratory. One of the three genres identified by Aristotle (1991), it contrasts with the judicial and epideictic genres. The judicial genre was associated with the legal arena and concerned courtroom pleadings over past events that were principally related to a person's innocence or guilt. Epideictic or ceremonial oratory was primarily associated with praising or condemning individuals as exemplified in funeral and victory speeches. Deliberative oratory was originally associated with the political arena and concerned debates relating

to public policy. It was therefore concerned with what was the best future policy or course of action. Amongst other things, 'deliberative reasoning addresses questions of the expedient use of time, money, and other resources' (Herrick, 2001, p. 79).

The extract of talk occurs early in the pay negotiation and involves talk from the organization's Human Resource (HR) and Finance Directors. It begins with the opening statements from the HR Director, which set out constraints that limited what the organization was able to offer for that year's pay increase:

HR Director: Okay. This year for September for Trust staff, I mean, we're looking at what sort of increase the Trust can afford and I think, you've had all the paperwork and basically you've had the purchasers' plans as well, which state the money that they're going to give us. You've got sheet one, this sheet one, and that basically tries to put all that information together, all together down in as few headings as possible, so you know exactly how much money, and just at this moment, [the Finance Director] will take us through that, alright?

The documents referred to were provided by the management side. The HR Director's points concerning the provision of these documents could be an appeal based on both ethos and pathos. That is, he could be projecting good character in providing the relevant documentation for the union side. Such good character could emanate from not trying to deny related documents and information to the union side. This action might also evince pathos through attempting to put the audience in a receptive frame of mind so ensuring that the meeting began on a positive note. The HR Director's central point focuses on the constraints that the organization faces. This is presented in the form of an enthymeme, which together with the example forms the two elements of logos (Aristotle, 1991). While the enthymeme, a form of rhetorical deduction, often involves suppressing a premise(s) or conclusion of an argument on the basis that an audience is capable of filling in the missing elements, they are also to be understood as being used in situations of

indeterminacy rather than certainty (Cunningham, 1991). The key enthymeme in the above extract is along the lines that 'the level of pay rise that the organization can afford is limited because of what they will receive from the purchasers of healthcare'. Not stated but implied is a missing premise that if they receive a low revenue from the purchaser then only a low pay rise will be possible. The rhetorical strategy is therefore to deflect responsibility for such an outcome onto a third party as there appears to be what Winkler (1974) some time ago referred to as a ghost at the bargaining table. This allows the HR Director to advance both a rhetoric of affordability based around circumstances and a rhetoric of transference. Rhetorically the HR Director in a pre-emptive manner seems to be trying to convince them that any possible objections they might have to what management will propose as a pay award is the responsibility of the external funding bodies.

The Finance Director then begins to talk in relation to the organization's financial position and what the pay award amounts to:

Finance Director: What we started off with was the actual reserves that had been made available to us by the various health authorities. With the initial reserves that we've managed to keep on one side for purposes of inflation, that's the total that we have from all the various health authority purchasers, and that's the grant in respect of inflation. And what we've done to that is reduce it by the various pay awards as they come through as applicable to staff who are on national negotiations. What we've then done is apply to that a 3% rate for staff on local conditions of service.

The situation here looks relatively straightforward. The organization receives money from various health bodies as part of a contracting process. The organization then reduces the reserves by the additions required under the pay award for that year. In his talk, there is a continuing sense of externalization as the Finance Director's talk is also constructed through a rhetoric of transference. The Director's argument is that the organization can pay a 3 per cent pay rise because of

the financial settlement from the purchasers. Implied within this again is the contention that the organization cannot pay above what is given by the purchasers. These third parties are therefore established as the principal reason behind the level of pay offer. The Finance Director, in similar fashion to the HR Director, presents the organization as bound by circumstances that mean it is impossible for them to pay beyond what they receive from their contracts. In terms of further rhetorical appeals the Director's rhetoric of transference also projects an emotional appeal as he argues that the local managers are hamstrung in what action they can take vis-à-vis the level of pay rise they can set. The Director's rhetoric of transference also ironically suggests the twin notions of control and centralization. That is, both Directors were keen advocates for localizing pay settlement arrangements and supported a shift away from nationally negotiated contracts. From interviews conducted with them, they had expressed the view that it would benefit the organization through establishing local control. Yet here in a contrary manner their rhetorical strategy is to project the local organization as possessing limited ability to make choices in relation to the pay uplift. Contrary to the claims they were known to have made for the benefits to local pay bargaining, the talk of both Directors exhibits no local responsibility on their part and instead scapegoats responsibility onto third parties.

Following the Finance Director's statement offering a 3 per cent pay rise, the HR Director proceeded to outline various options that the management had considered in relation to the offer:

HR Director: What we looked at as well is various options as well, what would staff want, would they want additional annual leave days? So we costed that up, so if there was a lower increase in the rate of pay then we said, give them say an additional two days leave.

In terms of persuasive discourse, the HR Director's comments on the possibility of

additional annual leave to make up for a lower pay award involves an appeal through ethos as a sense of good character seems to be projected through his stated concern with what staff might prefer. He evidences this through forwarding the example of extra holidays as something that staff might want. The use of the first person personal pronoun *we* might also suggest that the management side was united in trying to think of possible additions which could improve the overall award. The ethos is also extended through the reference to action in the form of actually costing the effect of additional annual leave in light of a lower percentage pay award. While the HR Director had suggested the possibility of different options, he goes on to repeat the offer stated earlier by the Finance Director:

HR Director (cont.): But I think, it was generally felt under the circumstances because our leave arrangements are very generous anyway, that staff would prefer to have the money. So all that being said, the preferred option was, so, well that's the money on the table, it's 3 per cent that we've got available for pay. Now if you wanted to divide it in some other way, we're quite willing to look at that, whether you wanted...

When the HR Director commented upon the generosity of the organization's holiday arrangements there was laughter from the trade union members. The possible hostility or disbelief that such laughter might suggest may mean that successful persuasion becomes more difficult. However, it does not mean that the situation is non-rhetorical since the Director is still attempting persuasion or what Bryant referred to as the 'process of adjusting ideas to people and people to ideas' (1953, p. 413). At the beginning of the above passage is therefore an enthymeme that could be expressed as: 'staff would prefer a cash-based pay rise because the organization's holiday entitlement is already very good'. Implied is a belief that if people have enough of one thing they will choose something else. Any staff preference would presumably also need to be considered in the light of what had

been the pay awards in the previous few years. The Director's rhetorical strategy also seems to be to draw out a relationship on the basis of consequent and antecedent. That is, the relationship between satisfaction with holiday arrangements and desire therefore for a pay rise is not one of causality. Instead, satisfaction with holidays is an antecedent, which to the Director the consequent of which is not more holidays, but instead a different option, in this case more cash. We then hear further confirmation that the 3 per cent offer is not open to negotiation. He also reaffirms the possibility to examine the ways in which the pay award can be broken down. We therefore read an appeal to ethos in which the management's good character is projected. This is expressed in an enthymeme: if the unions want the total pay uplift divided differently, the management are willing to consider that. Contained within this is the contention that the management will listen to what the trade union preference is. This does of course need to be heard against the continuing refrain that there is a maximum uplift available due to the actions of the purchasers.

Across this short extract of talk the two senior managers' rhetoric seemed to project both a bilateral and unilateral form of rhetoric: the former involves one side trying to do something *with* the other side, while the latter involves one side seeking to do something *to* the other side (Conley, 1990). The bilateral rhetoric could be argued to be instanced through the management claim that they were willing to listen and work with the trade unions on what the composition of the pay award should be. The unilateral form could be instanced in management's unwillingness to countenance a pay award beyond a maximum uplift of 3 per cent. We seem here to have both pluralism in the form of a bilateral rhetorical discourse, and unitarism in the unilateral rhetorical discourse of a managerial prerogative. The rhetorical analysis can therefore be argued to show competing approaches operating in tandem. What is

also clear is that the negotiation, while constructed through rhetorical discourse, is also material as there are potentially important economic and political matters at stake. The negotiation concluded later with the trade union agreeing to ballot their membership on a 3 per cent pay uplift, composed only of a cash uplift. The trade union had felt this was the most appropriate composition of pay award since they claimed that in the previous years the pay awards had lost ground with the cost of living. Here we are not contending that the agreement with the management side's pay offer was not also the outcome of power, but that management power was refracted in part through their rhetorical discourse.

Although these extracts of talk in the context of an industrial relation pay negotiation may appear quite bland, innocuous and underwhelming, their very mundaneness highlights the pervasiveness of rhetorical discourse. So what initially might be considered a relatively bland and innocuous piece of talk is actually rich with rhetorical strategy and appeal. The use of naturally occurring data also allows us to appreciate that in the context of a pay negotiation, talk will most likely be quite spontaneous. Thus, although the two sides to the negotiation may have prepared their cases beforehand, the actual talk will be more extemporaneous. The talk also allows us to read the social ordering of organization and business. For example, the rhetorical analysis has drawn out ideological dimensions in this case related to the managerial prerogative, as well as a shift to a more market-based orientation on the part of the management. A rhetorical analysis enables us therefore to appreciate the pay negotiation as an event but also how text and talk construct understandings of such phenomenon. The identification of even such apparently mundane talk as replete with rhetoric also highlights just how central rhetorical discourse is to organizational processes and practices, in turn justifying a focus on rhetoric.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter the focus has been on rhetoric. Rhetoric, a long-standing discipline that has its Western roots in the work of the sophists, Plato and Aristotle, was for a long period at the centre of a liberal education and integral to a citizen's education. While considered important and potentially powerful, it has also been derided and condemned. However, here the argument has been that when appreciated as persuasive discourse it is central to organizational processes and practices. Thus, it would seem difficult to engage in practices such as recruitment and selection, negotiation, selling, advertising, advocacy or leadership without some use of rhetoric. In terms of research, rhetoric also plays a significant role. As researchers, we write and talk and when doing so are reliant on rhetoric as part of the shaping and crafting process aimed in part at persuading an audience that our research has merit and deserves to be presented and published. Beyond the process of crafting research output, rhetoric is also a focus for and means of analysis. Rhetoric can therefore refer to a practice and any resulting product as well as being the means to analyse both of these. In that sense, it is both the object and subject of analysis. It is therefore both a practice and a means for conducting qualitative analysis, for example, through tropological or argument-based frameworks. In conducting qualitative research while 'producer-free' data in the form of naturally occurring talk or organizational documents may be particularly appropriate, semi-structured interviews can also be used, for example, as a means to analyse how actors rhetorically shape meanings in relation to events or phenomenon.

While the chapter has not set out to overlook the view that rhetoric can be studied to analyse abuses of power, here it has been argued that we should not restrict ourselves only to a focus on 'rhetickery'. Instead, given the abundance of rhetoric, we should also be willing to engage in serious rhetorical

analysis of that rhetoric, whether its purpose is seemingly noble or base. As Martin (2014) argues, rhetoric is often dismissed because it is not based on eternal truths or certainty. It therefore potentially threatens consensus and order. Rhetorical analysis can therefore be an important means to reveal the conflicts that underlie human association as alternative views and argument can be made that can destabilize and challenge the dominant ideology. This is particularly important since the texts and images of business and management practice are more available and abundant than ever before, highlighting the recurring relevance for the need to understand persuasive discourses. That organizational actors deploy arguments and ideas in a situated manner to define, name, advance, contest or challenge seems to make clear the importance of analysing the rhetoric that is central to such activity.

REFERENCES

- Alvesson, M. and Kärreman, D. (2000) 'Taking the linguistic turn in organizational research: Challenges, responses, consequences', *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 36(2): 136–58.
- Andrews, R. (2014) *A Theory of Contemporary Rhetoric*. London: Routledge.
- Aristotle (1991) *The Art of Rhetoric*. London: Penguin Classics.
- Beason, L. (1991) 'Strategies for establishing an effective persona: An analysis of appeals to ethos in business speeches', *The Journal of Business Communication*, 28(4): 326–46.
- Beech, N. (1998) 'Literature review: Rhetoric and discourse in HRM', *Management Learning*, 29(1): 110–14.
- Billig, M. (1996) *Arguing and Thinking*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Bitzer, L. (1968) 'The rhetorical situation', *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 1(1): 1–14.
- Bizzell, P. and Herzberg, B. (1990) *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*. Boston, MA: St. Martin's Press.
- Boden, D. (1994) *The Business of Talk*. London: Sage.
- Booth, W.C. (2004) *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric: The Quest for Effective Communication*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Brown, A., Ainsworth, S. and Grant, D. (2012) 'The rhetoric of institutional change', *Organization Studies*, 33(3): 297–321.
- Bryant, D.C. (1953) 'Rhetoric: Its function and scope', *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 39(4): 401–24.
- Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2015) *Business Research Methods*. 4th ed. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Burke, K. (1941) 'Four master tropes', *The Kenyon Review*, 3(4): 421–38.
- Burke, K. (1969) *A Rhetoric of Motives*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Cameron, D. (2000) *Good to Talk*. London: Sage.
- Case, P. (1999) 'Remember re-engineering? The rhetorical appeal of a managerial salvation device', *Journal of Management Studies*, 36(4): 419–41.
- Charteris-Black, J. (2014) *Analysing Political Speeches: Rhetoric, Discourse and Metaphor*. Basingtoke, UK: Palgrave.
- Cohen, D. (1994) 'Classical rhetoric and modern theories of discourse', in I. Worthington (ed.), *Persuasion: Greek Rhetoric in Action*. London: Routledge, pp. 69–82.
- Conger, J. (1998) 'The necessary art of persuasion', *Harvard Business Review*, 76(3): 82–95.
- Conley, T. (1990) *Rhetoric in the European Tradition*. London: University of Chicago Press.
- Conrad, C. (2011) *Organizational Rhetoric*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Corbett, E.P.J. and Connors, R.J. (1999) *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*. 4th ed. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Cunningham, D.S. (1991) *Faithful Persuasion: In Aid of a Rhetoric of Christian Theology*. London: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Domajenko, B., Drglin, Z. and Pahor, M. (2011) 'Rhetorical skills as a component of midwifery care', *Midwifery*, 27(2): 125–30.
- Easton, G. and Aranjó, L. (1997) 'Management research and literary criticism', *British Journal of Management*, 8(1): 99–106.
- Edmundson, R. (1984) *The Rhetoric of Sociology*. London: Macmillan.

- Fernando, W.D.A. and Cohen, L. (2013) 'The rhetoric and reality of home-work harmonization: A study of highly skilled Sri Lankan women from public and private sector organizations', *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(15): 2876–93.
- Flynn, A. and Davis, P. (2015) 'The rhetoric and reality of SME-friendly procurement', *Public Money and Management*, 35(2): 111–18.
- Foss, S.K., Foss, K.A. and Trapp, R. (2002) *Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric*. 3rd ed. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
- Gane, M. (1989) 'Rhetoric', *Economy and Society*, 18(2): 127–31.
- Gill, A. (1994) *Rhetoric and Human Understanding*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- Gold, J., Holman, D. and Thorpe, R. (2002) 'The role of argument analysis and story telling in facilitating critical thinking', *Management Learning*, 33(3): 371–88.
- Golden, J.L., Berquist, G.F. and Coleman, W.E. (1990) *The Rhetoric of Western Thought*. 6th ed. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing Company.
- Greatbatch, D. and Clark, T. (2012) 'Conversation analysis in management research', in G. Symon and C. Cassell (eds.), *Qualitative Organizational Research: Core Methods and Current Challenges*. London: Sage, pp. 451–72.
- Griffin, F. (2009) 'Merck's open letter and the teaching of ethos', *Business Communication Quarterly*, 72(1): 61–72.
- Grint, K. (1995) *Management: A Sociological Introduction*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Hamilton, P.M. (1997) 'Rhetorical discourse of local pay', *Organization*, 4(2): 229–54.
- Hamilton, P.M. (1999) 'Persuasion and industrial relation: A case of argument in a joint consultative committee', *Industrial Relations Journal*, 30(2): 166–76.
- Hamilton, P.M. (2003) 'The saliency of synecdoche: The whole and the part of employment relations', *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(7): 1569–85.
- Hamilton, P.M. (2005) 'The mission statement as epideictic rhetoric: Celebrating organizational identity', in A. Pullen and S. Linstead (eds.), *Organization and Identity*. London: Routledge, pp. 162–81.
- Hartelius, J.E. and Browning, L.D. (2008) 'The application of rhetorical theory in managerial research', *Management Communication Quarterly*, 22(1): 13–39.
- Heracleous, L. and Klaering, L.A. (2014) 'Charismatic leadership and rhetorical competence: An analysis of Steve Jobs's rhetoric', *Group and Organization Management*, 39(2): 131–61.
- Herrick, J.A. (2001) *The History and Theory of Rhetoric: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. London: Allyn & Bacon.
- Hoffman, M.F. and Ford, D.J. (2010) *Organizational Rhetoric*. London: Sage.
- Hogan, M. (2013) 'Michael O'Leary's 33 daftest quotes', *The Guardian*, 8 November, accessed at www.theguardian.com/business/shortcuts/2013/nov/08/michael-o-leary-33-daftest-quotes.
- Holt, R. and Macpherson, A. (2010) 'Sense-making, rhetoric and the socially competent entrepreneur', *International Small Business Journal*, 28(1): 20–42.
- Honderich, T. (1995) *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Hood, C. (2000) *The Art of the State*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Huang and Tansley, C. (2012) 'Sneaking through the minefield of talent management: The notion of rhetorical obfuscation', *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 23(17): 3673–91.
- Keith, W.M. and Lundberg, C.O. (2008) *The Essential Guide to Rhetoric*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Kirkbride, P.S. and Durcan, J. (1987) 'Bargaining power and industrial relations', *Personnel Review*, 16(2), 3–11.
- Langstrand, J. and Drotz, E. (2016) 'The rhetoric and reality of lean: A multiple case study', *Total Quality Management and Business Excellence*, 27(3–4): 398–412.
- Leff, M. (1987) 'Modern sophistic and the unity of rhetoric', in J.S. Nelson, A. Megill and D.N. McCloskey (eds.), *The Rhetoric of the Human Sciences: Language and Argument in Scholarship and Public Affairs*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 19–37.
- Lowenhaupt, R.J. (2014) 'The language of leadership: Principal rhetoric in everyday practice', *Journal of Educational Administration*, 52(4): 446–68.

- Martin, J. (2014) *Politics and Rhetoric*. London: Routledge.
- Martin, R. (1992) *Bargaining Power*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press
- McCloskey, D. (1998) *The Rhetoric of Economics*. 2nd ed. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin.
- McDonald, P., Pini, B. and Mayes, R. (2012) 'Organizational rhetoric in the prospectuses of elite private schools: Unpacking strategies of persuasion', *British Journal of Education*, 33(1): 1–20.
- McGeough, F. (2015) 'Performance reporting in Ireland: The ongoing gap between rhetoric and reality', *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 28(1): 2–10.
- Musson, G. and Tietze, S. (2004) 'Places and spaces: The role of metonymy on organizational talk', *Journal of Management Studies*, 41(8): 1301–23.
- Myers, G. (1989) 'Persuasion, power and the conversational model', *Economy and Society*, 18(2): 221–44.
- Oswick, C. (2012) 'Discourse analysis and discursive research', in G. Symon and C. Cassell (eds.), *Qualitative Organizational Research: Core Methods and Current Challenges*. London: Sage, pp. 473–91.
- Peters, K., Maruster, L. and Jorna, R.J. (2011) 'The evaluation of knowledge claims in an innovation project: A case study', *Management Learning*, 42(5): 537–63.
- Pinto, J. (2016) 'Wow! That's so cool!': The Icehotel as organizational trope', *Human Relations*, 69(4): 891–914.
- Plato (1956) *Protagoras*. London: Penguin Classics.
- Plato (1994) *Gorgias*. Oxford, UK: Oxford World Classics.
- Prior, L. (2008) 'Repositioning documents in social research', *Sociology*, 42(5): 821–36.
- Rasche, A., Gilbert, D.U. and Schedel, I. (2013) 'Cross-disciplinary ethics education in MBA programs: Rhetoric or reality?', *Academy of Learning and Education*, 12(1): 71–85.
- Razouk, A.A. and Bayed, M. (2010) 'Evolution of the practices of human resource management in France towards a strategic model: Rhetoric or reality', *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 21(8): 1207–27.
- Roberts, R.H. and Good, J.M.M. (1993) 'Introduction: Persuasive discourse in and between disciplines in the human sciences', in R.H. Roberts and J.M.M. Good (eds.), *The Recovery of Rhetoric: Persuasive Discourse and Disciplinarity in the Human Sciences*. Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, pp. 1–21.
- Rowe, G.O. (1997) 'Style', in S.E. Porter (ed.), *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period: 330BC–AD400*. New York: Brill, pp. 121–58.
- Simons, H.W. (1989) 'Introduction', in H.W. Simons (ed.), *Rhetoric in the Human Sciences*, London: Sage, pp. 1–9.
- Simons, H.W. (1990) 'The rhetoric of inquiry as an intellectual movement', in H.W. Simon (ed.), *The Rhetorical Turn: Invention and Persuasion in the Conduct of Inquiry*. London: University of Chicago Press, pp. 1–31.
- Singh, R. (1992) 'Negotiations', in B. Towers (ed.), *Handbook of Industrial Relations Theory and Practice*. London: Kogan Page, pp. 137–51.
- Soldan, Z. and Nankervis, A. (2014) 'Employee perceptions of the effectiveness of diversity management in the Australian public service', *Public Personnel Management*, 43(4): 543–64.
- Storey, J. (1995) 'Human resource management: Still marching on, or marching out?', in J. Storey (ed.), *Human Resource Management: A Critical Text*. London: Routledge, pp. 3–32.
- Suddaby, R. and Greenwood, R. (2005) 'Rhetorical strategies of legitimacy', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 50(1): 35–67.
- Tietze, S., Cohen, L. and Musson, G. (2003) *Understanding Organizations Through Language*. London: Sage.
- Toulmin, S. (1958) *The Uses of Argument*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Truss, C., Gratton, L., Hope-Hailey, V., McGovern, P. and Stiles, P. (1997) 'Soft and hard models of human resource management: A reappraisal', *Journal of Management Studies*, 34(1): 53–73.
- Vickers, B. (1988) *In Defence of Rhetoric*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Walker, R. and Monin, N. (2001) 'The purposes of the picnic: Using Burke's dramatist pentad to analyse a company event', *Journal of Organisational Change Management*, 14(3): 266–79.

- Warner, M. and Nankervis, A. (2012) 'HRM practices in Chinese MNCs: Rhetoric and reality', *Journal of General Management*, 37(3): 61–80.
- Watson, T.J. (1994) *In Search of Management*. London, Routledge.
- Watson, T.J. (1995) 'Rhetoric, discourse and argument in organizational sense making: A reflexive tale', *Organization Studies*, 16(5): 805–21.
- Watson, T.J. (2004) 'HRM and critical social science analysis', *Journal of Management Studies*, 41(3): 447–67.
- Watson, T.J. (2010) 'Critical social science, pragmatism and the realities of HRM', *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 21(6): 915–31.
- Whittle, A., Mueller, F. and Mangan, A. (2008) 'In search of subtlety: Discursive devices and rhetorical competence', *Management Communication Quarterly*, 22(1): 99–122.
- Williams, J.D. (2009) *An Introduction to Classical Rhetoric: Essential Readings*. Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Winkler, J.T. (1974) 'The ghost at the bargaining table: Directors and industrial relations', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 12(2), 191–212.

Stories and Narratives

Yiannis Gabriel

INTRODUCTION

Storytelling has been part of human life at least for as long as we can think of humans as inhabiting a culture. Stories, sagas, myths, fables, tales, legends, narratives of every kind, are the yarn from which culture is woven. They are what gives people a past and a future, what celebrates their achievements, what gives meaning to their sufferings, what organizes their experiences and, often, drives their actions. Etymologically deriving from the Greek *eidenai* (to know), story has a legitimate claim as the fundamental unit through which knowledge has been produced, shared and passed from generation to generation over the centuries.

The role of story as the elementary particle of knowledge and meaning has been complemented and maybe usurped by the rise of history and science, two relative newcomers. Somewhat at odds with stories that emerge spontaneously out of the depths of human experience, conscious and

unconscious, history and science claim to emerge systematically, *methodically*, following certain procedures of verification, confirmation and systematization. Where is the evidence? asks theory, a question of modest importance to story. History and science, as disciplines rooted in facts, call for a methodology to determine how empirical material (i.e. the material generated by our senses from the outer and inner worlds) may be systematically collected, organized, analysed and tested if it is to provide the firm ground for rigorous explanations, generalizations and predictions.

There was a time in the earlier part of the twentieth century when major thinkers believed that modernity, with its emphasis on information, science and facts, had sounded the death-knell on storytelling (Benedict, 1931; Benjamin, 1968). Stories, it was thought, were doomed to become museum pieces, relics of a pre-modern universe. This view now seems itself rather quaint, as narrative has become a major part in many

contemporary discourses, not least in politics, management, ethics, culture, the arts, the media and so forth. It is even claimed sometimes that we now inhabit a narrative universe, where various storylines emerge, merge, interact, compete and disappear, seeking to sustain meaning, prop up institutions and motivate action.

In organizations too, stories and narratives have attracted considerable attention in the last 25 years, as part of a narrative turn (e.g. Czarniawska, 2010; Georgakopoulou, 2006b; Polkinghorne, 1988), a growing belief that narratives do not merely 'happen' in the world but actually constitute the way that the world, including organizations, public policy, science and politics are constructed and experienced. As a result, organizational theory, along with business and management studies, have deployed a variety of research methods to examine stories and narratives 'scientifically', treating them as raw materials for theory. This chapter provides an overview of the major approaches in this area, singling out some of the points of agreement and disagreement.

STORIES, NARRATIVES, TEXTS AND DISCOURSES

As the narrative turn is played out in different fields of study, the meanings of four key terms, namely, story, narrative, text and discourse, have multiplied, merged, overlapped and fragmented. Attempts to order or police their usage through definitions have not been very successful. Neither maybe should they be, since one of the qualities of the narrative turn has been a move away from adjudication by definition. Terms, concepts and so forth are approached not as immutable essences, but as elements of language in action. What constitutes a story may change as culture moves from an oral age, where every story is spoken, to a written age, where stories are written and illustrated, to an electronic age of

SMS texts and images, tweets and so forth (Kearney, 2002). Thus, stories and narratives are used interchangeably by some authors (e.g. Polkinghorne, 1988). Others, like Boje (1991, 2008), aware of how individual stories are often silenced by official narratives, restrict story to living, actually verbalized accounts, and treat narratives as larger formations that emerge from fragments of stories, official reports, theories, formal statements and so forth. In line with Lyotard (1991 [1984]), some narratives may then be viewed as 'grand narratives', such as the narrative of emancipation or the narrative of progress, and others as 'small narratives', local, personal and frequently fragmented.

My own preference is to treat stories and narratives as special types of text, and stories as a special type of narrative. Many things can be viewed as 'text', as long as we can 'read' meaning into them. These include catalogues, inscriptions, labels, PowerPoint slides, lists, recipes, logos, scientific hypotheses, theories, neurotic symptoms, buildings, archaeological remains, clothes, musical instruments and so forth. Narratives can be viewed as particular types of accounts involving temporal chains of inter-related actions undertaken by characters with purposes, emotions and desires, or events that affect such actors positively or negatively. Narratives are then no simple signs, icons or images, still less are narratives material objects and physical events, all of which may, in deference to Barthes (1977 [1966]), be regarded as texts but not narratives. Narratives, by contrast, require verbs denoting what characters did or what happened to them. They are not mere snapshot photographic images, but require sequencing, something noted by most systematic commentators on narratives (Bruner, 1990; Culler, 2001 [1981]; Czarniawska, 1997, 1999; Labov, 1972; MacIntyre, 1981; Polkinghorne, 1988; Ricoeur, 1984; Van Dijk, 1975; Weick, 1995). As we move from narrative to story we are forced to recognize the increasing importance of plot, which 'knits events together', allowing us to understand

the deeper significance of an event in the light of others (Czarniawska, 1999, p. 64f; Polkinghorne, 1988, pp. 18–19). In line with Ricoeur and following a tradition of reasoning that goes back to Aristotle's *Poetics*, we may then view a story as describing:

[a] sequence of actions and experiences done or undergone by a certain number of people, whether real or imaginary. These people are presented either in situations that change or as reacting to such change. In turn, these changes reveal hidden aspects of the situation and the people involved, and engender a new predicament which calls for thought, action, or both. This response to the new situation leads the story towards its conclusion. (Ricoeur, 1984, p. 150)

What characterizes this definition is a central ambiguity (Czarniawska, 1999; Gabriel, 2000) – the characters and events in the plot may be real or imagined, they can be the product of experience or fantasy. This ambiguity gives stories a unique combination of two qualities, that of having a plot at the same time as representing reality. Stories purport to relate to facts that happened, but also discover in these facts a meaning; they are welcome or unwelcome, good or bad, accidental or deliberate, ordinary or exceptional. In short, stories are not 'just fictions' (although certain stories may be fictional), neither are they mere chronicles of events as they happened. Instead, they represent poetic elaborations of narrative material, aiming to communicate facts as experience, not facts as information (Benjamin, 1968). This accords the storyteller a unique narrative privilege, poetic licence, that enables him/her to maintain an allegiance to the effectiveness of the story, even as he/she claims to be conveying something 'truthful'.

This poetic licence that makes stories suspect as reliable 'data', is the very reason why many researchers are currently drawn to them. Stories may not provide accurate or reliable accounts of actual events, but they offer powerful insights into the *meaning* accorded to such events. They then reveal the judgements that different people pass on events they

experience, the emotions which such events fuel and the desires which are gratified, frustrated or silenced by them. Narratives, in their great variety, which includes 'grands récits', 'petits récits', meta-narratives (Lyotard, 1991 [1984]), counter-narratives (Bamberg, 2004), myths, world-views, ideologies and so forth, can then be viewed as larger meaning-creating and meaning-sustaining schemes that mould human experience and drive human action. In this way, we can envisage numerous stories actually being told, alluded to or even silenced (Izak et al., 2015) coagulating or coalescing to constitute or to challenge a particular narrative. Overlapping stories with similar *storylines* (for example, older employees being treated with disrespect by a particular employer or by many employers) can then be viewed as contributing to a narrative ('old employees are viewed as a cost by organizations which seek to get rid of them' or even 'old people are treated with disrespect'). Such narratives can then be seen as supporting, challenging or simply existing side by side with other narratives or prompting counter-narratives of their own.

A wide range of organizational and business phenomena can be explored using stories and narratives. These include culture and politics, innovation, entrepreneurship and resistance to change, discipline and disorder, leadership and followership, group dynamics, alliances and conflicts and so forth (see, for example, Boje, 1991; Gabriel, 1991a; Rhodes & Brown, 2005). Thus, *even* researchers adhering to a predominantly positivist paradigm, have found ways of identifying, collecting and analysing stories and narratives as a means of developing their research agendas. Interpretive researchers, for their part, have hugely enlarged their repertoires of working with stories and narratives, using the resources of discourse and narrative analysis (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Fairclough, 1992; Georgakopoulou, 2002; Hollway & Jefferson, 2001; Kohler-Riesman, 1993; Labov & Waletzky, 1967; Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Reed, 1998), often

imported or translated from other disciplines, including ethnography, psychoanalysis, literary criticism and media studies.

The result of these developments has been a general legitimization of the use of narrative and storytelling in organizational research and its proliferation in a wide range of inquiries. It is now quite common to encounter doctoral dissertations deploying a storytelling or narrative methodology with no fear of embarrassment. Reputable journals regularly publish articles in this area. Thus, by February 2016, *Organization Studies* had published 43 articles with *story* or *storytelling* in the abstract, 61 articles with *narrative* in the abstract and 652 articles with *narrative* in some part of the text. The corresponding figures for *Organization* were 39, 53 and 456, and for the various *Academy of Management* publications 68, 32 and 952. Some of these publications deploy storytelling as a major part of their research methodology, while others may use narrative analysis and storytelling as part of a wider range of methodological and conceptual scaffolding. The next sections give an overview of how stories and narratives have been theorized in organizational and management studies before examining some methodological issues raised by their application.

STORIES, NARRATIVES AND ORGANIZATIONS

One of the main reasons for studying narratives and stories in organizations has been a recognition, since the 1980s, of the importance of culture in organizations (Allaire & Firsirotu, 1984; Barney, 1986; Frost et al., 1991; Pettigrew, 1979; Schein, 1985). Far from being cultural deserts, organizations came to be viewed as entities with a more or less rich cultural life, where many if not most practices and processes were culturally rather than instrumentally driven. The study of culture had, of course, been the terrain of

anthropology and ethnography, with their theories of kinship systems, mythologies, beliefs, rituals and so forth. As scholars of organization turned their attention to culture, organizational rituals, sagas, taboos and other cultural elements came under close scrutiny.

Paramount among these were narratives and stories, texts that in their different ways are pithy and memorable. Set against a backdrop of information overload that characterizes much of organizational life, narratives and stories can be approached as rich depositories of meaning helping people make sense of their experiences and motivate their actions. Several early contributions to the study of stories and narratives in organizations noted how they act as cognitive maps assisting sensemaking (e.g. Wilkins, 1984) but also how they can be instruments of managerial control over organizational participants (Wilkins and Ouchi, 1983). In an article that observed many similarities between organizational and mythological narratives, Martin et al. (1983) argued that a relatively narrow range of storylines circulates in most organizations, offering *retrospective* rationalizations for the actions of significant actors by attributing blame and credit. Martin and her colleagues propose a 'uniqueness paradox' according to which every organization's narratives make a claim to uniqueness (the uniqueness of its culture, its leaders etc.), even though they fall into highly formulaic patterns.

Scholars of organization were quick to realize the persuasive qualities of stories, especially as management gurus and consultants were picking them up at around that time (e.g. Peters & Waterman, 1982) and there is a distinct managerial emphasis in this research (e.g. McConkie & Boss, 1986), the argument being that managers could rely, at least in part, on effective storytelling to disseminate their ideas, initiate change, instil conformity and overcome resistance. There is now a very healthy literature on how managers and leaders may use stories to enhance organizational effectiveness, implement change or motivate

their followers (Armstrong, 1992; Denning, 2005; Salmon, 2010).

Against this background, Boje's (1991, p. 106) contribution broke new ground. Boje argued that an organization can be viewed as 'a collective storytelling system in which the performance of stories is a key part of members' sense making and a means to allow them to supplement individual memories with institutional memory'. What was original in Boje's argument was that most storytelling in organizations is fragmented, terse and abbreviated. There is no implicit or explicit 'agreed text' (p. 106) to these stories, but only variants surfacing in unique performances. Stories form part of a noisy, plurivocal and polysemic universe where they surface, they collide, they are often contested and eventually disappear. Many wither away while still-born. Defining a story as 'an oral or written performance involving two or more people interpreting past or anticipated experience' (p. 111), Boje emphasized the multi-authored character of organizational storytelling, where different participants contribute different narrative elements, amplifying some lines and contesting others, while, by contrast, de-emphasizing the importance of plot. Boje's approach thus became part of a wider problematizing of 'story' in post-modern theorizing that questioned the centrality of plot and character in narratives and has tended to broaden the concept of story to include many conversational texts, not necessarily having beginnings, middles and ends (e.g. Georgakopoulou, 2006a, 2006b; Kearney, 2002).

In subsequent works, Boje developed his postmodern approach to organizational narrative through an exploration of how corporate discourses silence and marginalize some narratives while privileging others (Boje, 1995). Concerned about attempts by powerful corporations to silence stories that they object to, Boje proposed the concept of 'antenarrative' – a 'fragmented, *non-linear, incoherent, collective, unplotted*, and pre-narrative speculation, a bet ... a wager that a proper narrative

can be constituted' (Boje, 2001, p. 1). It is within this antenarrative space that marginalized voices can be found, frequently not able to articulate themselves as full narratives or stories but capable of doing so under the right circumstances. Boje's later work shows a much keener awareness of the political ramifications of narratives and acts as an important corrective to the 'stories as sensemaking' approaches that all too frequently overlook power and politics.

Stories as sensemaking have now become part of the orthodoxy in studies of organizations. As Weick (1995, p. 129f) argues, stories aid comprehension by drawing connections between causes and effects, by offering mnemonic landmarks of earlier events and by conveying shared values and assumptions. They highlight what actions are rewarded and what are punished, where trouble lies and what the future may hold. What is lost in this approach, sometimes, is the deeper meaning of a story. Why do some stories prove very much more powerful than others? Why does a story mobilize and enthrall people while another leaves them cold? All too often, a story may assist sensemaking while actually destroying meaning. 'You don't have to be mad/crazy to work here but it helps', one of the commonest organizational storylines, highlights how people make sense of the absurdities and irrationalities of corporate life, their very meaninglessness coming to the rescue of sensemaking. Thus, in a very thought-provoking contribution, Pelzer (2004) has argued that sensemaking is a surrogate rather than a prop for meaning. When a large part of everyday life is reduced to meaningless routines, when meaning loses its anchors, we turn to sensemaking as its inadequate replacement.

A different use of stories and narratives addresses more directly their role in organizational politics and conflict. That narratives play an important part in all politics in tangible as well as intangible ways is now widely acknowledged (Bevir, 2011; Bevir and Rhodes, 2015; Rhodes, 2011). Anyone

who has worked in an organization knows that many, if not most, narratives are about politics – about conflicts and alliances, about deals and double-deals, about victories and losses and so forth – or indeed they are part of politics. In this way, stories may be used as instruments of persuasion and even brutalization, becoming depositories of disciplinary power. ‘This is what happens to people who break rules or act in this way’ such stories proclaim. The ‘chastising effect’ of *comic* stories which ridicule particular groups has been known at least since Hobbes (1962 [1651]) and Bergson (1980) (for organizational contexts, see, e.g. Collinson, 1988; Davies, 1988; Linstead, 1985).

Tragic stories, for their part, demonstrate the wide range of trouble that organizational life can visit on individuals and groups, including humiliation, insult, bullying, oppression, discrimination, demotion and dismissal, and offer various warnings of what is to be avoided and what is to be emulated. In my own work (Gabriel, 1991a, 1991c), I showed how stories told by conscripted soldiers in training camps acted as powerful instruments of organizational socialization and control, generating anxiety and fear, and dampening critical and rebellious attitudes. Neither should it be thought that such stories are limited to a few particularly oppressive organizations. Theodosius (2008) offers numerous examples of how cliques of nurses used storytelling as a humiliation or exclusion device to maintain unofficial hierarchies and privileges. Czarniawska (2008, p. 1034) has argued that such humiliation, far from being exceptional, is ‘standard organizational by-product, considered to be an unavoidable if regrettable effect of power’. Sims (2003), for his part, has shown that humiliation is experienced when stories of particular groups are systematically challenged, ignored or ridiculed. Stories can then be viewed as part of a disciplinary machinery in many organizations, silencing opposition, instilling conformity and spreading anxiety and fear.

This line of argument is consistent with various approaches which have postulated a decline of employee resistance from organizational life or, more generally, from the political and cultural lifeworld of late capitalism. In a curious way, many of the narratives discussed in organizational literature tend to be managerial, ultimately serving the interests of managerial control, or pluralist, coexisting often uneasily as different parties seek to legitimate their actions and interests (e.g. Brown, 2002). Stories by oppressed or exploited employees are often couched in terms of cynical distancing (e.g. Fleming and Spicer, 2003; O’Leary, 2003). What is less common are stories displaying a rebellious or defiant attitude, challenging managerial prerogatives or ridiculing bureaucratic irrationality and waste. Yet stories of resistance have been documented widely in organizational life (e.g. Brown et al., 2005; Humphreys & Brown, 2002; Karlsson, 2012; Mishler, 2005) and most persistently surfaced in my own fieldwork (Gabriel, 1991b, 2000, 2004b). Snowden (2001) has demonstrated brilliantly how stories that seem contrived to promote managerial agendas instantly prompt ‘anti-stories’ that puncture the official narratives and turn them into objects of ridicule and disparagement.

Between narratives of oppression seeking to enforce control and narratives of resistance which actively oppose them, I have argued that there is a class of narratives that neither promotes nor contests management controls, but rather seeks to bypass them. These are the narratives and stories which I assigned to the ‘unmanaged organization’, a kind of organizational dreamworld dominated by desires, fantasies and emotions (Gabriel, 1995). This unmanaged organization does not challenge directly the practices of power and management, but involves different attempts to evade them through spontaneous activities which may involve clever ruses, privately coded texts, noise, silence, graffiti, cartoons, whispers, nods, smiles, secrets, gossip, but above all narratives and stories – all of which seek to

reintroduce the claims of the pleasure principle in organizational life at the expense of the reality or performance principles (Marcuse, 1955).

NARRATIVES AND IDENTITY

In recent times, identity has emerged as something of a 'master signifier' in many areas of social and organizational studies (Alvesson et al., 2008). There are many reasons for this including its ability to mutate and fragment, to grow and shrink, to incorporate and shed elements and to become a terrain ripe for crises and struggles. Unlike related terms, like self and subjectivity, identity is not tainted by philosophical assumptions of sovereignty and rationality. It easily accommodates a social component while preserving the fundamental qualities of sameness and uniqueness across time.

Identity and its transformations seem well attuned to the fluid and porous qualities of late modernity (Coupland & Brown, 2012). In particular, today's organizations make ambiguous and contradictory demands on their employees. They frequently demand that they go beyond 'doing a job', by buying into their values, brand and narratives. At the same time, they fail to offer employees the security of stable employment, by constantly looking for opportunities to outsource and off-shore. The project of identity describes well the plight of the individual who is frequently on the move, who is often called to reinvent themselves, the individual who is free from an obligation of life-long loyalty to an employer (or anyone else for that matter) but who is expected to fully identify with his/her employer for indeterminate periods of time. The concept also ties in well with the ways that contemporary capitalism creates disciplined and self-disciplined employees who, in seeking to maintain their identities, go beyond the call of duty (Alvesson, 2001; Fleming, 2009; Fleming & Sturdy, 2011; Kärreman & Alvesson, 2001).

Organizational scholars have been particularly interested in exploring the intertwining of personal identity narratives and organizational narratives, one that may range from full identification to provisional or ambivalent identification, to total disidentification or distancing (Humphreys & Brown, 2002). Thus Thornborrow and Brown (2009) who studied British paratroopers found that the identities of these soldiers revolved around an idealized conception of the regiment. Their stories revolved around reminiscences of great and fun times they had had and found their way onto websites, documentaries and films about the regiment, sustaining a folklore of paratrooper heroism that reinforced the organizational narrative of the regiment's elite status. These stories were used to socialize and even 'test' new recruits and seamlessly embed themselves in their new-found identities. Studying a global consultancy firm, on the other hand, Costas and Fleming (2009) found that personal narratives consistently sought to distance themselves from their employer by embracing personal narratives of imaginary authenticity allied to narratives critical of their employer. Yet, these employees recognized that their putative 'real' identities were paradoxically unreal and foreign to their conformist organizational identities, a paradox explained by revisiting the concept of alienation.

In addition to personal identities, narratives have been viewed as instrumental in fostering and developing organizational and group identities. 'Shared' stories and narratives enhance solidarity and engagement, raising organizations above the level of machine bureaucracies, infusing meaning and life into them and, in the view of some authors, turning them into institutions, i.e. objects of value (e.g. Linde, 2009). Just as communities and nations need symbolically charged myths and stories to sustain them, organizations too need them to sustain and nurture them (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). We noted already Martin et al.'s (1983) 'uniqueness paradox', the narratives through which

organizations claim to be singular and unique. In this way, many organizations cultivate ‘foundation myths’, stories that mythologize the organization’s foundation, for example in the founder’s encounter with social injustice (Schwabensland, 2006) or the entrepreneur’s early experiments in his father’s garage. Such stories serve both a legitimating and an inspirational function (Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001), and are extensively relied on by consultants keen to strengthen the collective identities and energize the individual identities of their clients.

THE MYTHICAL DIMENSION IN NARRATIVES

If organizations can be viewed as cultures, it would follow that at least some of their narratives have mythical qualities. These were among the qualities that brought them to the attention of early organizational scholars, like Mitroff and Kilmann (1975). They highlighted the *epic* qualities that characterize many managerial stories, that lionize the manager as a hero capable of extraordinary deeds and achievements. Indeed, it is these mythical qualities that brought narratives to the attention of management gurus who have made epic stories of managers prevailing against the odds part of their stock in trade (Clark & Salaman, 1996; Collins, 2007). Several of the early contributions to organizational narratives also displayed a keen interest in myths, as ‘popular untruths’ (Bowles, 1989; Ingersoll & Adams, 1986; Rosen, 1984) that cannot be easily corrected by appeal to reason and facts. Since then, there has been a steady growth of scholarship on organizational mythologies, although there has been no general agreement about how a myth may be differentiated from stories and narratives.

The relation between story, narrative and myth, remains one of substantial disagreement and confusion among scholars. Many

scholars, following the classical formulation of Meyer and Rowan (1977) tend to look at myths as institutionalized narratives that accord legitimacy to organizations, their structures and practices. Others, however, including myself (Gabriel, 2000, 2004a) and Grint (2010) prefer to restrict the concept of myth to those larger than life narratives, possessing sacral meanings, revolving around unique deeds performed by great heroes and addressing the enduring mysteries of life, that as Barthes (1973) suggested, lose their historical bearings. They assume a cosmic or transhistorical significance whereas stories concern the realities of mundane everyday life, in all their commonplace regularity. Thus while a myth can be seen as part of *mythology*, a system of beliefs and narratives that has a cosmic dimension, a story can be seen more as part of *folklore* (in the sense that accountants, computer programmers and other professionals develop their own folklores).

The mythological qualities of organizational narratives have not attracted as much attention as their sensemaking, identity and political aspects, but there has been a steady growth of scholarship, culminating in Gabriel’s (2004a) and Kostera’s (2008a, 2008b, 2008c) edited compilations of mythological explorations of organizational stories. Bowles (1989, 1990), an early pioneer in this area, argued that as religious world-views are displaced by scientific and managerial ones, mythology loses its sacral associations and assumes, instead, secular analogues. Thus religious myths are supplanted by, among others, managerial myths; these may revolve around the great achievements of superheroes like Steve Jobs or the wicked deeds of supervillains like Kenneth Lay. Other characters that populate these myths may be shrewd tricksters, rescue objects, sleeping beauties, white knights (Hirsch, 1986), or even holy fools (Kets de Vries, 1990). Overall, however, Bowles was of the view that such managerial mythologies generally fail to rise much above ideology. As a result, they rarely assume the

cosmic significance of genuine myths and are quickly forgotten.

One way of linking organizational narratives with myths has been by seeking to identify various unconscious symbolic archetypes that reside in a collective unconscious of humanity expressing timeless anxieties and desires. Inspired by Jung's (1968) theory of archetypes, Moxnes (1998, 1999), has argued that the characters of organizational narratives enact deep unconscious roles drawn from a relatively small cast of twelve archetypal or 'deep' roles whose origin lies in the essential family – father, mother, son and daughter. Each of these roles is available as either a positive or negative version, matching the archetypes of the father as God or devil, the mother as queen or witch, the son as crown prince or black sheep, and the daughter as princess or whore. These deep roles recur regularly in organizational mythology, and real individuals come to occupy these roles in specific narratives, thus drawing on the symbolic power of the original archetype. A leader can then be experienced, after the father archetype, as benevolent God-like father or, alternatively, as a devil. Alternatively, he or she may be experienced (and feature in stories) as a prince (hero or clown), or indeed in any of the other deep roles. This archetypal approach into organizational stories and narratives remains somewhat undeveloped but contains many rich possibilities, if reservations regarding the idea of a collective unconscious can be addressed.

NARRATIVES, KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING

A different approach to the study of organizational narratives treats them as a means of sharing knowledge, especially among people facing the same problems and concerns. Such groups of people are sometimes referred to as 'communities of practice' (Wenger 1998),

individuals who have complementary skills and outlooks. These can be occupational groups, like airline pilots, computer analysts and academics, but they can also refer to people sharing hobbies or interests, like plane spotters or amateur gardeners, or people who share particular problems such as medical conditions or forms of discrimination (Wenger, 1998).

Within communities of practice, the distinction between knowledge and action is diminished. Knowledge becomes inscribed in practices that are not the property of any one individual, and much of this knowledge is not scientific, assuming instead the form of *narrative knowledge*, which includes stories, recipes and direct accounts of experience. Learning from each other's stories was a crucial feature of ethnographic research carried out by Orr (1996) among photocopy repair technicians. Their stories of machine faults and idiosyncrasies provided a far more coherent and pliable guide and toolbox than formal manuals and instructions. Telling and listening to stories about fixing machines is also a means of celebrating the technicians' professional identity 'as masters of the black arts of dealing with the machines and of the only somewhat less difficult arts of dealing with customers' (p. 2). A study undertaken by Patriotta (2003) at a Fiat plant in Italy draws attention to the political dimension of narrative knowledge, emphasizing how problem-solving narratives can be viewed as 'detective stories' aimed at sharing social practices on how to deal with formal hierarchies and attributing or shifting blame.

Narrative knowledge, as it emerges from current scholarship in organizational studies, should not be restricted to a kind of traditional or 'folk wisdom', surrogate for scientific knowledge. Instead, it is increasingly argued that it is of vital importance for managers, professionals and even people working at the cutting edge of scientific discovery (Chia, 1998; Czarniawska-Joerges, 1995; Orr, 1996). In this way, physicians at a

conference may announce the latest scientific break-through in the treatment of diabetes, but in informal discussions may swap stories about the effects of particular treatments on particular patients. Far from being seen as the enemy of science, narrative knowledge may then emerge as its indispensable corollary (Tsoukas, 1998; Tsoukas & Hatch, 2001) – knowing the rules of the game is one thing, knowing how to play the game effectively is another.

RESEARCHING STORIES AND NARRATIVES: SOME METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

In the previous sections we have considered how stories and narratives can be studied in relation to a number of interconnected themes – organizational culture and sense-making; politics, organizational conflict, power and resistance; individual, occupational and organizational identities; mythological themes and archetypes and their capacity to stir up powerful emotions; and the management, generation and sharing of knowledge. There are several other research themes and agendas that have been pursued through the exploration of stories and narratives, including emotion, innovation, entrepreneurship, gender, trauma and others. In all of these instances, stories and narratives are viewed by researchers as opening windows into organizational life that reveal aspects unavailable or inaccessible through other means, for example questionnaires or structured interviews. Qualitative researchers making use of stories and narratives frequently deploy them in combination with other research methods such as ethnographic research, semi-structured or unstructured interviews, observational methods, archival and picture research. We will now examine some of the common methodological issues raised by narrative and storytelling research.

TO COLLECT OR TO ELICIT?

One of the first decisions facing narrative investigators is whether to elicit stories by asking appropriate questions after explaining the point of their inquiry to their respondents, or whether to collect them as and when they occur. Both approaches are justified, depending on the purposes of the research. Eliciting stories generates larger amounts of field material, the stories ‘framed’ for the benefit of the researcher. Different accounts of the same story may be compared as can the story profiles of different organizations in a relatively economical manner. Questions that can be used to elicit stories include:

- Can you think of an incident in this organization that made you feel happy / unhappy / proud / disappointed (etc.)?
- Can you think of an incident that sums up the best / worst aspects of your job?
- Can you think of an incident / episode that sums up the quality of leadership / management / customer care (etc.) in this organization?
- Can you think of a story that you heard in this organization that influenced the way you approached it (or you approached your work)?
- What kind of things do you and your colleagues talk about when you meet each other?
- Have there been any funny stories making the rounds in your department lately? Any sad stories?
- Can you think of an incident that radically changed your views of this organization or the people who work here?

Most respondents recognize very well the meaning of the word ‘story’ (which is to be preferred here to the word ‘narrative’) and respond well to questions like the above, provided the researcher has given a sound explanation of the rationale for asking such questions. When eliciting stories, researchers may invite respondents to comment on a story they have already heard, respecting, of course, the confidentiality of their sources. The main disadvantage of eliciting stories is that the researcher risks imposing his/her

definitions of what is important or meaningful. Stories are not encountered in their natural state, i.e. as part of organizational interaction and talk, but are framed and performed for the benefit of an outsider. They are part of the dyadic research discourse rather than of organizational discourse proper.

The alternative to collecting stories when and as they occur is more time- and money-consuming and would form part of a broader ethnographic approach. It was an important part of traditional ethnographies in sociology of work (e.g. Beynon, 1973; Tangherlini, 1998; Watson, 1994) and has been used with notable success in the study of organizational humour (e.g. Collinson, 1988; Coser, 1959). Collecting stories in situ is especially important if the emphasis lies on approaching stories as performance rather than merely as text. As Boje (1991) has noted, when encountered in their natural state, most stories omit large amounts of information which is taken for granted, and are presented in a terse manner. Observers who are not familiar with such taken-for-granted information may miss the point or the catch or may not be aware that a story is actually being performed at all.

LISTENING TO STORIES

One of the safest ways to undermine storytelling research is if the researcher asks too many questions, especially questions that may be perceived as undermining the story's meaning or credibility. For this reason, the researcher must relinquish any notion of 'discovering what actually happened' and become a fellow-traveller on the narrative, engaging with it emotionally, displaying interest, empathy and pleasure in the storytelling process. The researcher should not risk alienating the storyteller by appearing to doubt the narrative or by placing a respondent under cross-examination, but conspire to detach the narrative from the narrowness of the discourse of facts, guiding it instead in the

direction of free-association, reverie and fantasy. Contradictions and ambiguities in the narrative are accepted with no embarrassment. Ambiguity lies at the heart of many stories, displaying an individual's ambivalent feelings or partial knowledge or understanding. While the researcher may ask for clarification of particular aspects of the story, the storyteller must feel that such clarification is asked in the interest of increased pleasure and empathy rather than in the form of pedantic inquiry.

As fellow-travellers on a story, researchers must not only be prepared to suspend their disbelief but also to withhold their moral values and assumptions. They may be invited to laugh at sexist or racist stories, to commiserate with characters for whom they have no sympathy or to celebrate achievements in which they see no merit. Researchers who find themselves in such situations should generally resist the attempt to directly challenge a narrative, although probing it in discreet ways may actually be a way of enriching them. To this end, they may use prompts like 'Would everyone think of this as a funny incident?' or 'What would you say to someone who may not find this so funny?' or 'How typical do you think that this type of incident is?'

When using stories as part of a research agenda, researchers sometimes find themselves being invited to share their own stories. Most researchers tend to hold back from emotional disclosures about themselves, but such disclosures can open up great opportunities for sharing stories. Sharing involves mutuality, something that cannot be achieved so long as the relation between researcher and researched is deeply asymmetrical, the former asking questions, the latter disclosing personal and even intimate emotional experiences. A researcher who is willing to share some of his/her own emotional experiences with his/her respondents can open up large areas of empirical investigation that would remain closed to other researchers (Gabriel & Ulus, 2015). This is especially

effective in settings where self-disclosure by the researcher can help bridge cultural divides and minimize the feeling that the researcher is an outsider, an intruder or even a colonizer.

ANALYSING STORIES

The ways of analysing narratives and stories, using them as the building blocks for theory, are examined in the currently burgeoning literature of narrative analysis (e.g. Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015; Hollway & Jefferson, 2001; Kohler-Riesman, 1993; Wells, 2011). There are innumerable ways of analysing stories and narratives, some of which may involve interpreting or deconstructing the text, others in juxtaposing them with other narratives or interrogating them from different theoretical vantage points. When listening to a recorded story (and there are great advantages to listening to stories rather than reading transcripts), researchers may ask themselves questions like:

- Is it a good story? What makes it a good story?
- What is the emotional tone of the story?
- What is your own emotional response to the story?
- Is there anything about the story that troubles/bothers you?
- Who stands to gain from this story and what political interests does it promote?
- If you could re-write history how would you change the story?
- What do you see as the main meaning/moral of the story?
- What does the story tell us about (a) the nature of the project, (b) the nature of the organization, (c) the topic of our study?
- What meaning/moral may outsiders read into the story?
- Could the story also contain some other tacit or implicit meanings?
- What are the 'silences' in the story?
- Does the story fall into a recognized genre?
- How does it relate to other stories collected as part of this research?

In analysing stories and narratives, researchers must accept that there is no single method¹ which will magically convert 'data into theory'. Researchers must use their own skills and resources of probing, questioning, juxtaposing, framing, filtering and so forth. Such skills call for the exercise of *imagination*, which Kant described as 'a blind but indispensable function of the soul, without which we would have no knowledge whatsoever, but of which we are scarcely conscious' (quoted in Freydberg, 2005, p. 21). Hillman (1999) who made imagination a centre piece of his psychology views it as a great archetypal principle, like love, order, beauty and justice, a principle that 'endlessly produces possibilities' (p. 183) restlessly examining, exploring, juxtaposing, visualizing and testing.

Mills (1959) argued that sociological imagination is the sine qua non for creating sociological knowledge by looking for regularities and irregularities, paradoxes and trends, while being willing to play devil's advocate and question most received assumptions by persistently asking the questions 'why', 'what if' and 'so what' (see also Gabriel, 2015). All in all, imagination is probably the critical quality required of a narrative investigator if his/her empirical material is to generate insights beyond the commonplace and predictable.

REFLEXIVITY

If there is no royal road for analysing stories, there is also no foolproof way of validating narrative research. In recent years, there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of reflexivity as an on-going process of vigilance and self-questioning that narrative researchers must exercise in enhancing the trustworthiness and value of their work (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009; Willig, 2001). Reflexivity refers to a constant questioning on the part of researchers of their own stance vis-à-vis their empirical material,

analysis and theorizing. Reflexivity emanates from a realization that the investigators' own values, experiences and motives cannot be separated from the research process. These can certainly be a source of bias and error which reflexivity may forestall. More importantly, however, the researchers' own previous experience, sensitivity and self-knowledge can be valuable resources, enhancing their engagement with narrative material and deepening their understanding of its meaning and significance. Unlike other forms of social research, listening to stories prompts the researcher to engage emotionally with his/her informant, inviting the researcher to respond to experiences of disappointment, achievement, trauma, loss, injustice and so forth. These are not experiences that will leave the investigator indifferent to be analysed and theorized later, but will inevitably make demands to engage emotionally with what is being said, to make some judgements and to display the right emotional responses.

Reflexivity begins with a recognition of the effects of the researcher's presence in the field. Reflexive researchers do not aspire to be value-neutral and are alert to the ways that their research expresses, reinforces or undermines the values that they hold. They are also sensitive to the fact that some of their deeper values, needs and insecurities may surface while conducting their research. For this reason, reflexive researchers are aware of the possibility that in undertaking a serious piece of research they embark on a journey whose end may see them emerge as different subjects. Reflexive researchers then cannot deal with empirical material as something separate from themselves – as something stored in a computer file, to be processed, squeezed or distilled to generate knowledge at a later date. Instead, their own identity as researchers and their own practices as investigators are intimately intertwined with their experiences in the field.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the familiar and important ethical issues facing qualitative researchers, including confidentiality and anonymity, intrusiveness, researching vulnerable people, discovering different forms of misconduct and endangering the well-being of respondents, inviting respondents to share their experiences through stories and narratives creates special ethical challenges. Listening to other people's stories makes them uniquely vulnerable in a number of ways. At what point does a respondent's distress or pain in telling a story become unacceptable? What if the questions unleash a torrent of painful memories and traumas in the respondent which he/she is unprepared to deal with? In researching the stories of vulnerable, broken or brow-beaten people an interviewer may unwittingly get far more than he/she bargained for. Even when ostensibly the respondents are self-confident, mature individuals, an invitation to 'tell their story' may reveal deep cracks and vulnerabilities. Such was the case with a series of interviews with unemployed managers and professionals, some of whom repeatedly broke down in tears in the course of telling their experiences (Gabriel et al., 2010, 2013) and required considerable reassurance and restoration before the completion of their interviews.

Another very important ethical question concerns the interpretation and potential misinterpretation of the stories related 'in good faith' by respondents. How often do we, as narrative investigators, feel uncomfortable with some of the inferences and deductions we draw from stories and narratives that we appear to believe and endorse during the field work? How often would we experience discomfort or embarrassment were our respondents to read exactly what we say about them in our published work? Is anonymity meant to protect the respondent or indeed the investigator, who can often deny that a particular

interpretation or inference pertains to a narrative provided by a particular respondent? Maybe, then, the key ethical issue for the narrative investigator is how to treat the narratives that he/she collected *with respect* and yet at the same time with what would be legitimate scientific *suspicion*.

A related ethical issue facing narrative investigators concerns the ownership of the story. In protecting the confidentiality of respondents, researchers often tamper with what they regard as insignificant details, for example, by recasting a male respondent as a female respondent. They may also choose to ignore or obliterate what they may view as irrelevant aspects of a story, such as the subject's sexual orientation or an aspect of their earlier life, that would be absolutely essential to the subject. More generally in editing or retelling a story they have heard, narrative researchers face vital ethical issues of what is significant and to whom, which rarely have easy answers.

CONCLUSION

Stories and narratives are currently attracting the attention of an increasing number of organizational researchers. Much of this attention is focused on the relation between storytelling and culture and politics, knowledge transfer, individual and group identities; and the relations between formal organizational narratives and private, personal stories, the value of storytelling in knowledge transfer and the building of communities of practice. Another rich area of storytelling studies looks at narratives told by and about leaders, as part of the wider management or meaning and emotion, some of this material generating more practical guidebooks and manuals on how leaders may improve the quality of their stories and use them to inspire their followers. Finally, an increasing importance is accorded to the study of stories and narratives as means of investigating the emotional and

ethical qualities of organizations. The collection, interpretation and analysis of stories have, thus, proven very useful in a wide range of contexts and feature regularly in academic publications and doctoral dissertations.

While the power of narratives to communicate meanings and experiences is increasingly recognized, a majority of business and management scholars remain tied to positivist traditions that are deeply suspicious or dismissive of stories. This situation is likely to persist, though several management and business journals are currently publishing articles in this area. In the last five years, the Web of Science (wok.mimas.ac.uk) listed no fewer than 113 articles with the word 'storytelling' in the title or abstract in business and management journals that included *Human Relations* (11), *Management Learning* (5), *Academy of Management Journal* (2), *Journal of Organizational Change Management* (8), *Journal of Management Inquiry* (3), *Culture and Organization* (4) and *Organization* (4). When the words 'story' or 'stories' are also included, the number swells to 652 and journals include *Harvard Business Review* (26), *Journal of Business Ethics* (14), *Organization Science* (7) and *Organization Studies* (6). In the same period, 455 articles were listed with 'narrative' in the title or abstract in all of the above journals as well as in *Journal of Business Ethics* (21), *Journal of Business Research* (23), *Work, Employment and Society* (15), *Marketing Theory* (13), *Journal of Consumer Behavior* (8) and *Academy of Management Review* (6).

For researchers who are attracted to narratives and storytelling as important aspects of organizational life, serious difficulties remain. The absence of an agreed definition of narrative and story would not be much of a problem if it were not for the confusion that it creates when people with different assumptions and definitions try to communicate with each other. A more important difficulty concerns the as yet unanswered question of whether the concepts of story and narrative must themselves be historicized – whether, in other words, we must

recognize that, along with many other concepts (like class, work, identity, drama, painting, etc.), our culture, with its social media, its new communication technologies and its other unique characteristics has churned out new forms of storytelling, new forms of narratives and stories, maybe shorter, terser and looser than those known to our grandparents, which in some important respects have occupied the same conceptual space as traditional stories and narratives did in the past. Would the idea of a plotless story be a contradiction in terms or would it be an eminently sensible notion at a time when people no longer need a plot to make sense of a text?

Another enduring tension, in my view, concerns the relation between narratives and facts. Our times have deeply problematized the idea of a fact with some scholars being prepared to give it up altogether. Others, including myself, maintain that facts may be plastic but they are not infinitely malleable, and some of them may indeed be brutal (Taylor, 1971). A narrative may convert a defeat into victory and a hero into a fool, but cannot convert a violent death on the battlefield into a peaceful death on a bed.

These tensions pose serious challenges to social researchers making use of narratives and stories in their research. The rewards, however, of narrative-based research, the sudden discoveries and unexpected illuminations, the hidden depths and distorting illusions that it reveals amply justify facing up to these challenges.

Note

- 1 Method from the Greek μέθοδος meaning [travelling] 'along the path'.

REFERENCES

Allaire Y and Firsirotu ME. (1984) Theories of organizational culture. *Organization Studies* 5(3): 193–226.

- Alvesson M. (2001) Knowledge work: Ambiguity, image and identity. *Human Relations* 54(7): 863–86.
- Alvesson M and Kärreman D. (2000) Varieties of discourse: On the study of organizations through discourse analysis. *Human Relations* 53(9): 1125–49.
- Alvesson M and Sköldbberg K. (2009) *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*, London: Sage.
- Alvesson M, Ashcraft KL and Thomas R. (2008) Identity matters: Reflections on the construction of identity scholarship in organization studies. *Organization* 15(1): 5–28.
- Armstrong DA. (1992) *Managing by Storying Around: A New Method of Leadership*, New York: Doubleday.
- Bamberg MGW. (2004) Considering counter-narratives. In: Bamberg MGW and Andrews M (eds) *Considering Counter-Narratives: Narrating, Resisting, Making Sense*, Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 351–71.
- Barney JB. (1986) Organizational culture: Can it be a source of sustained competitive advantage? *Academy of Management Review* 11(3): 656–65.
- Barthes R. (1973) *Mythologies*, London: Paladin Books.
- Barthes R. (1977 [1966]) Introduction to the structural analysis of narratives. In: Heath S (ed.) *Image – Music – Text*, Glasgow, UK: Collins, 79–124.
- Benedict R. (1931) Folklore. *The Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, New York: Longman.
- Benjamin W. (1968) The storyteller: Reflections on the works of Nikolai Leskov. In: Arendt H (ed.) *Walter Benjamin: Illuminations*, London: Jonathan Cape.
- Bergson H. (1980) Laughter. In: Meredith G (ed.) *Comedy*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Bevir M. (2011) Public administration as storytelling. *Public Administration* 89(1): 183–95.
- Bevir M and Rhodes RAW (eds) (2015) *Routledge Handbook of Interpretive Political Science*, London: Routledge.
- Beynon H. (1973) *Working for Ford*, London: Allen Lane.
- Boje DM. (1991) The storytelling organization: A study of story performance in an office-supply firm. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 36(1): 106–26.

- Boje DM. (1995) Stories of the storytelling organization: A postmodern analysis of Disney as 'Tamara Land'. *Academy of Management Review* 38(4): 997–1035.
- Boje DM. (2001) *Narrative Methods for Organizational and Communication Research*, London: Sage.
- Boje DM. (2008) *Storytelling Organizations*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bowles ML. (1989) Myth, meaning and work organization. *Organization Studies* 10(3): 405–21.
- Bowles ML. (1990) Recognizing deep structures in organizations. *Organization Studies* 11(3): 395–412.
- Brown AD. (2002) Narrative, politics and legitimacy in an implementation. *Journal of Management Studies* 35(1): 35–58.
- Brown AD, Humphreys M and Gurney PM. (2005) Narrative, identity and change: A case study of Laskarina Holidays. *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 18(4): 312–26.
- Bruner JS. (1990) *Acts of Meaning*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Chia R. (1998) From complexity science to complex thinking: Organization as simple location. *Organization* 5(3): 341–69.
- Clandinin D and Connelly F. (2000) *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Clark T and Salaman G. (1996) Telling tales: Management consultancy as the art of storytelling. In: Grant D and Osrick C (eds) *Metaphor and Organizations*, London: Sage, 166–84.
- Collins D. (2007) *Narrating the Management Guru: In Search of Tom Peters*, London: Routledge.
- Collinson D. (1988) 'Engineering humour': Masculinity, joking and conflict in shop-floor relations. *Organization Studies* 9(2): 181–99.
- Coser RL. (1959) Some social functions of laughter. *Human Relations* 12(2): 171–82.
- Costas J and Fleming P. (2009) Beyond disidentification: A discursive approach to self-alienation in contemporary organizations. *Human Relations* 62(3): 353–78.
- Coupland C and Brown AD. (2012) Identities in action: Processes and outcomes. *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 28(1): 1–4.
- Culler J. (2001 [1981]) *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction*, London: Routledge.
- Czarniawska-Joerges B. (1995) Narration or science? Collapsing the division in organization studies. *Organization* 2(1): 11–33.
- Czarniawska B. (1997) *Narrating the Organization: Dramas of Institutional Identity*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Czarniawska B. (1999) *Writing Management: Organization Theory as a Literary Genre*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Czarniawska B. (2008) Humiliation: A standard organizational product? *Critical Perspectives on Accounting* 19(7): 1034–53.
- Czarniawska B. (2010) The uses of narratology in social and policy studies. *Critical Policy Studies* 4(1): 58–76.
- Davies C. (1988) Stupidity and rationality: Jokes from the iron cage. In: Powell C and Paton GEC (eds) *Humour in Society*, London: Macmillan, 1–32.
- De Fina A and Georgakopoulou A. (2015) *The Handbook of Narrative Analysis*, Chichester, UK: Wiley, 275–92.
- Denning S. (2005) *The Leader's Guide to Storytelling: Mastering the Art and Discipline of Business Narrative*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Fairclough N. (1992) Discourse and text: Linguistic and intertextual analysis within discourse analysis. *Discourse and Society* 3(2): 193–217.
- Fleming P. (2009) *Authenticity and the Cultural Politics of Work: New Forms of Informal Control*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Fleming P and Spicer A. (2003) Working at a cynical distance: Implications for power, subjectivity and resistance. *Organization* 10(1): 157–79.
- Fleming P and Sturdy A. (2011) 'Being yourself' in the electronic sweatshop: New forms of normative control. *Human Relations* 64(2): 177–200.
- Freydberg B. (2005) *Imagination in Kant's Critique of Practical Reason*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Frost PJ, Moore LF, Louis MR, Lundberg CC and Martin J. (1991) *Reframing Organizational Culture*, London: Sage.
- Gabriel Y. (1991a) On organizational stories and myths: Why it is easier to slay a dragon than to kill a myth. *International Sociology* 6(4): 427–42.

- Gabriel Y. (1991b) Organizations and their discontents: A psychoanalytic contribution to the study of corporate culture. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 27(3): 318–36.
- Gabriel Y. (1991c) Turning facts into stories and stories into facts: A hermeneutic exploration of organizational folklore. *Human Relations* 44(8): 857–75.
- Gabriel Y. (1995) The unmanaged organization: Stories, fantasies and subjectivity. *Organization Studies* 16(3): 477–501.
- Gabriel Y. (2000) *Storytelling in Organizations: Facts, Fictions, Fantasies*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Gabriel Y. (2004a) *Myths, Stories and Organizations: Premodern Narratives for Our Times*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Gabriel Y. (2004b) The narrative veil: Truth and untruths in storytelling. In: Gabriel Y (ed.) *Myths, Stories and Organizations: Premodern Narratives for our Times*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 17–31.
- Gabriel Y. (2015) Reflexivity and beyond: A plea for imagination in qualitative research methodology. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal* 10(4): 332–6.
- Gabriel Y and Ulus E. (2015) 'It's all in the plot': Narrative explorations of work-related emotions. In: Flam H and Kleres J (eds) *Methods of Exploring Emotions*, Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 36–45.
- Gabriel Y, Gray DE and Goregaokar H. (2010) Temporary derailment or the end of the line? Managers coping with unemployment at 50. *Organization Studies* 31(12): 1687–712.
- Gabriel Y, Gray DE and Goregaokar H. (2013) Job loss and its aftermath among managers and professionals: Wounded, fragmented and flexible. *Work, Employment and Society* 27(1): 56–72.
- Georgakopoulou A. (2002) Methods of text and discourse analysis. *Journal of Pragmatics* 34(9): 1305–8.
- Georgakopoulou A. (2006a) The other side of the story towards a narrative analysis of narratives-in-interaction. *Discourse Studies* 8(2): 235–57.
- Georgakopoulou A. (2006b) Thinking big with small stories in narrative and identity analysis. *Narrative Inquiry* 16(1): 122–30.
- Grint K. (2010) The sacred in leadership: Separation, sacrifice and silence. *Organization Studies* 31(1): 89–107.
- Hillman J. (1999) *The Force of Character: And the Lasting Life*, New York: Random House.
- Hirsch PM. (1986) From ambushes to golden parachutes: Corporate takeovers as an instance of cultural framing and institutional integration. *American Journal of Sociology* 91(4): 800–37.
- Hobbes T. (1962 [1651]) *Leviathan: Or the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil*, London: Collier-Macmillan.
- Hollway W and Jefferson T. (2001) Free association, narrative analysis and the defended subject: The case of Ivy. *Narrative Inquiry* 11(1): 103–22.
- Humphreys M and Brown AD. (2002) Narratives of organizational identity and identification: A case study of hegemony and resistance. *Organization Studies* 23(3): 421–47.
- Ingersoll VH and Adams GB. (1986) Beyond the organizational boundaries: Exploring the managerial myth. *Administration and Society* 18(3): 105–36.
- Izak M, Hitchin L and Anderson D. (2015) *Untold Stories in Organizations*, London: Routledge.
- Jung CG. (1968) *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, London: Routledge.
- Karlsson J. (2012) *Organizational Misbehaviour in the Workplace: Narratives of Dignity and Resistance*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kärreman D and Alvesson M. (2001) Making newsmakers: Conversational identity at work. *Organization Studies* 22(1): 59–89.
- Kearney R. (2002) *On Stories*, London: Routledge.
- Kets de Vries MFR. (1990) The organizational fool: Balancing a leader's hubris. *Human Relations* 43(8): 751–70.
- Kohler-Riesman C. (1993) *Narrative Analysis*, London: Sage.
- Kostera M. (2008a) *Mythical Inspirations for Organizational Realities*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kostera M. (2008b) *Organizational Epics and Sagas: Tales of Organizations*, Basingstoke, UK; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kostera M. (2008c) *Organizational Olympians: Heroes and Heroines of Organizational Myths*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Labov W. (1972) *Language in the Inner City*, Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Labov W and Waletzky J. (1967) Narrative Analysis: Oral versions of personal experience. In: Helm J (ed.) *Essays on the Visual and Verbal Arts: Proceedings of the American Ethnological Society*, Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 12–44.
- Linde C. (2009) *Working the Past: Narrative and Institutional Memory*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Linstead S. (1985) Jokers wild: The importance of humour in the maintenance of organizational culture. *Sociological Review* 33(4): 741–67.
- Lounsbury M and Glynn MA. (2001) Cultural entrepreneurship: Stories, legitimacy, and the acquisition of resources. *Strategic Management Journal* 22(6–7): 545–64.
- Lyotard J-F. (1991 [1984]) *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
- MacIntyre A. (1981) *After Virtue*, London: Duckworth.
- Marcuse H. (1955) *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*, Boston, MA: Beacon.
- Martin J, Feldman MS, Hatch MJ and Sitkin SB. (1983) The uniqueness paradox in organizational stories. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 28(3): 438–53.
- McConkie ML and Boss RW. (1986) Organizational stories: One means of moving the informal organization during change efforts. *Public Administration Quarterly* 10(2): 189–205.
- Meyer JW and Rowan B. (1977) Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology* 83(2): 340–63.
- Mills CW. (1959) *The Sociological Imagination*, Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.
- Mishler EG. (2005) Patient stories, narratives of resistance and the ethics of humane care: A la recherche du temps perdu. *Health* 9(4): 431–51.
- Mitroff I and Kilmann RH. (1975) Stories managers tell: A new tool for organizational problem solving. *Management Review* 64(7): 18–28.
- Moxnes P. (1998) Fantasies and fairy tales in groups and organizations: Bion's basic assumptions and the deep roles. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology* 7(3): 283–98.
- Moxnes P. (1999) Deep roles: Twelve primordial roles of mind and organization. *Human Relations* 52(11): 1427–44.
- O'Leary M. (2003) From paternalism to cynicism: Narratives of a newspaper company. *Human Relations* 56(6): 685–704.
- Orr JE. (1996) *Talking about Machines: An Ethnography of a Modern Job*, Ithaca, NY: ILR Press/Cornell.
- Patriotta G. (2003) Sensemaking on the shop floor: Narratives of knowledge in organizations. *Journal of Management Studies* 40(2): 349–75.
- Pelzer P. (2004) The Flying Dutchman and the discontents of modernity. In: Gabriel Y (ed.) *Myths, Stories and Organizations: Premodern Narratives for Our Times*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 137–50.
- Peters TS and Waterman RH. (1982) *In Search of Excellence*, New York: Harper & Row.
- Pettigrew A. (1979) On studying organizational cultures. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 24(4): 570–81.
- Phillips N and Hardy C. (2002) *Discourse Analysis: Investigating Processes of Social Construction*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Polkinghorne DE. (1988) *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Reed M. (1998) Organizational analysis as discourse analysis: A critique. In: Grant D, Keenoy T and Osrick C (eds) *Discourse and Organization*, London: Sage, 193–213.
- Rhodes C and Brown AD. (2005) Narrative, organizations and research. *International Journal of Management Reviews* 7(3): 167–88.
- Rhodes RAW. (2011) *Everyday Life in British Government*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Ricoeur P. (1984) *Time and Narrative, Volume 1*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Rosen M. (1984) Myth and reproduction: The conceptualization of management theory, method and practice. *Journal of Management* 21(3): 303–22.
- Salmon C. (2010) *Storytelling: Bewitching the Modern Mind*, London: Verso.
- Schein EH. (1985) *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Schwabenland C. (2006) *Stories, Visions, and Values in Voluntary Organisations*, Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.
- Sims D. (2003) Between the millstones: A narrative account of the vulnerability of middle managers' storytelling. *Human Relations* 56(10): 1195–211.
- Snowden DJ. (2001) Narrative patterns: The perils and possibilities of using story in organisations. *Knowledge Management* 4(10): 1–14.
- Tangherlini T. (1998) *Talking Trauma: Paramedics and Their Stories*, Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi.
- Taylor C. (1971) Interpretation and the sciences of man. *Review of Metaphysics* 25(1): 3–51.
- Theodosius C. (2008) *Emotional Labour in Health Care: The Unmanaged Heart of Nursing*, Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Thornborrow T and Brown AD. (2009) 'Being regimented': Aspiration, discipline and identity work in the British Parachute Regiment. *Organization Studies* 30(4): 355–76.
- Tsoukas H. (1998) Forms of knowledge and forms of life in organized contexts. In: Chia RCH (ed.) *In the Realm of Organization: Essays for Robert Cooper*, London: Routledge.
- Tsoukas H and Hatch MJ. (2001) Complex thinking, complex practice: The case for a narrative approach to organizational complexity. *Human Relations* 54(8): 979–1013.
- Van Dijk TA. (1975) Action, action description, and narrative. *New Literary History* 6(2): 275–94.
- Watson TJ. (1994) *In Search of Management: Culture, Chaos and Control in Managerial Work*, London: Routledge.
- Weick KE. (1995) *Sensemaking in Organizations*, London: Sage.
- Wells K. (2011) *Narrative Inquiry*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wenger E. (1998) *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Wilkins AL. (1984) The creation of company cultures: The role of stories in human resource systems. *Human Resource Management* 23(1): 41–60.
- Wilkins AL and Ouchi WG. (1983) Efficient cultures: Exploring the relationship between culture and organizational performance. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 28(8): 468–81.
- Willig C. (2001) *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology: Adventures in Theory and Method*, Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Organizational Discourse Analysis

Gail T. Fairhurst and François Cooren

INTRODUCTION

Organizational discourse analysis (hereafter, ODA) represents a broad class of approaches examining the constitutive effects of language; processes of text production, distribution, and consumption; and reflexive, interpretive analysis aimed at deciphering the role of discourse in a socially constructed reality (Grant et al., 2011, p. xvii). More specifically, a constitutive *language* focus emphasizes its organization and what it is doing; it is performative of a social reality rather than reflective of it (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Gergen, 2001). *Texts* refer to the material representation of discourse in spoken or recorded forms (Taylor & Van Every, 2000), and they may range from written documents to memory traces to verbal routines – all of which may be reconfigured through continued use (Derrida, 1988). Finally, *discourses* are meaning systems anchored in socio-historical time that source and constrain communicating actors

simultaneously. Discourses source actors by providing them with repertoires of speech and behavior (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), while also disciplining them to its ways (Foucault, 1975, 1983). In short, ODA wants to know how processes of language and communication coalesce to constitute one socio-material reality over another.

In this chapter, we direct ourselves to three key issues, the first of which involves answering the question, ‘what does ODA do that other qualitative methods do not?’ We demonstrate that ODA adopts a constitutive view of communication (Cooren, 2015) and a muscular view of language and social interaction (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000), in contrast to other methods for studying communication in organizations. It also demonstrates a strong interest in three overlapping concerns that other methods find more difficult to capture: processual views of organizing, relational and subtle manifestations of power, and issues of materiality.

The second issue asks, ‘how does ODA answer the questions to which it directs itself?’ In this section, we demonstrate a range of both theoretical and methodological considerations depending upon the questions under consideration. Processual views of organizing, for example, offer a variety of approaches centered on the organizing potential of language and text. Issues of power move up a level of abstraction to study discursive formations, while issues of materiality may combine both of these.

Finally, we ask, ‘how does one implement ODA in its various forms?’ There are too many forms of ODA to cover in a single chapter (Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001), thus we have chosen to focus on five of the most prominent: rhetorical analysis, ethnomethodology-informed conversation analysis, narratology, critical discourse analysis, and the CCO (communicative constitution of organizations) approach. We conclude with a discussion of the future of ODA for organizational studies.

WHAT QUESTIONS DOES ODA ANSWER THAT OTHER METHODS DO NOT?

To answer this question, consider that many traditional methods for studying the communication of organizations and its actors, such as network analysis or survey methods, view communication as a simple act of information transmission (Axley, 1984). By contrast, ODA is more meaning-centered. It adopts a constitutive view of communication by positioning discourse and, more generally, interaction as actively participating in the creation of organizational forms (Cooren, 2015), the meanings for which are often negotiated, frequently fragmented, and ultimately unfinalizable (Grant et al., 2011). ODA is thus more likely to problematize what *organization* and *organizing* consist of.

While grounded theory methods also focus on communication, they mainly rely on

actors’ language to identify content themes in the data in order to translate them into scientific concepts (Charmaz, 2006; Tracy, 2013). Content themes are largely abstractions, or what some scholars suggest is ‘meaning condensation’ (Lee, 1999; p.89).

Put another way, content themes reveal the ways in which language simply reflects a social reality, rather than constructs it. ODA adopts a far more muscular view of language and interaction (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000), such as we see in *turn-taking patterns* that reveal interruptions and floor dominance (Fairhurst et al., 1995); episode initiation and closure through *speech act* use (Cooren & Fairhurst, 2004); *category work* that automatically frames one outcome as more logical than another (Jayyusi, 1984; Sacks, 1992); *ventriloquizations* in which one actor speaks for or on behalf of the organization writ large or other entities (Cooren, 2010); or simplified *argument structure* as an indicator of institutionalization (Green et al., 2009).

As mentioned, ODA often directs itself to three (increasingly) overlapping domains of study that other methods struggle to capture: processual views of organizing, relational and subtle manifestations of power, and issues of materiality. First, in terms of *processual views of organizing*, ODA studies the organizing potential of language, conversations, and texts, such as the sequential pacing that talk gives to tasks, how interactional moves or objects can signal the organization’s presence from one moment to the next, and the co-defined nature of all relationships (Boden, 1994).

For example, Fairhurst and Cooren (2004) found that an injured officer’s use of designated police categories in a radio call signaled how she had joined the search for her own body, in the sense that she was using the discourse of high reliability organizations (HROs) to routinize emotions and communicate efficiently. An interaction analysis over the course of the call also demonstrated consistent deferral by the police dispatcher to the commands of police supervisors on scene that, in turn, paralleled

the stand-down by other beat officers (Cooren & Fairhurst, 2004; Fairhurst, 2007a). Category work and dominance/deferral patterns constituted the means by which the scene of action organized into a coherent pattern, reflective of HROs, in which swift, coordinated action address safety concerns, and emotions are routinized to shorten response times (Weick et al., 2005).

Second, in terms of *relational and subtle manifestations of power*, ODA studies discourses and their widespread effects. Recall that discourses are complex systems of meaning suffused with social and historical practices (Grant et al., 2011, p. xxi). Of great interest in ODA is how discourses produce ‘truth effects’, in the ways that culturally rooted knowledge is treated as if it were true (Foucault, 1975, 1983). In more specific terms, ODA studies power through what is made to appear natural or normal vis-à-vis the context. This is because it directs itself to the conditions under which ‘something can become an object for possible knowledge’ (Foucault, 1998, p. 460) and how that object becomes problematized, defined, and ‘just the way things are’.

Leonardi’s (2008) study of technologically determinist rhetoric is one such example. He observed a discourse of inevitability pervading technology adoption in multi-national corporations, obscuring the indeterminate relationship between technology and culture. Users unwittingly restricted their own agency vis-à-vis technology use because they perceived a ‘natural order’ due to science, progress, or nature that they did not wish to violate (p. 980).

Discourses also create ‘subjectivity’ in the way they position actors as objects of knowledge; such ‘positionings’ are the focus of ODA. In the organization, they frequently reinforce power asymmetries and foster unselfconscious discipline (Deetz, 1992), in much the same way as Sewell et al. (2012) found in their study of the discourses of surveillance as it impacted call center employees. Aspiring employees became ‘piggies in

the middle’ when they were coopted by management to train hard for elusive management positions that they would never assume.

Finally, ODA also studies how power and resistance knit together in complex ways (Foucault, 1975, 1983), such that the struggles over meaning that ensue require treating them as a singular dynamic (Fleming & Spicer, 2008; Mumby, 2005). ODA can reveal the ways in which the same discursive act can both resist and reproduce extant power relations, as Collinson’s (1988) classic ethnography of working class masculinity in a truck manufacturing plant demonstrated. Humor as a discursive practice demonstrated the ways in which shop floor workers resisted the managerial culture, produced rigid adherence to the strongly masculine culture of the shop floor, and yet maintained control over worker’s output.

Third, in terms of *issues of materiality*, ODA increasingly questions the limits of language and a purely constructionist orientation (Cooren, 2015; Taylor & Van Every, 2000). This is because all discourse, whether expressed through the form of a turn of talk, a text, an ideology, an intonation, a look, and so on, possesses a material foundation (e.g. speech sounds, written text, neurons firing, and so on) whose presence – and some would say agency – must be considered along with the actions of human beings (Cooren, 2006; Cooren et al., 2008; Latour, 1994).

Consider that critical discourse analysis focuses on the relationships among discourse, institutions, and structures of privilege that have material qualities (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 2010; Fairclough & Thomas, 2004). For instance, Fairclough (2006) and Fairclough and Thomas (2004) examined how the discourse of globalization gets translated into texts (e.g. consulting books) that, in turn, shape the globalization of discourse to influence practice, including displacing workers through reorganization and downsizing in the name of globalization. For Fairclough, discourse is but one of many elements to consider in a social setting, not the

primary medium through which other elements gain meaning.

By contrast, socio-materialists who use ODA focus on practices, which are organized, situated activities undertaken with material arrangements (Schatzki, 2005). They analyze practices vis-à-vis communication, where the discursive and material interface via objects, sites, and bodies function as the focal points of study (Ashcraft et al., 2009; Cook & Brown, 1999). Sorsa et al. (2014), for example, used video-ethnography to study how organizational strategy was used in performance appraisals. They analyzed the ways in which strategy was appropriated in the appraisal, highlighting the embodied, intertextual, and material nature of strategy. Gestures, in particular, were found to concretize strategy while strategic texts gained agency (read, power) as they were ‘ventriloquized’ (Cooren, 2010).

As demonstrated in the foregoing example, processual views of organizing, power manifestations, and materiality are overlapping concerns; increasingly, this is the case for many ODA researchers (Ashcraft et al., 2009; Cooren, 2015; Fairhurst & Putnam, 2014). However, exactly *how* ODA addresses these key themes is the subject of the section below.

HOW DOES ODA ANSWER QUESTIONS RELATED TO ORGANIZING, POWER, AND MATERIALITY?

To study *processual views of organizing* vis-à-vis the organizing potential of language and texts, ODA studies what they are doing *in situ*, how they are doing it, and what it means (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2014). The focus is on the communication in and around the organizing activities themselves, including how actors’ interaction patterns over time coproduce organizing. Different forms of discourse analysis each adopt their own ways of

studying the organizing potential of language and texts, including whether one or both are emphasized. For example, turn-taking and category work might fascinate a conversation analyst (Boden, 1994). Dominance and deferential patterns would intrigue an interaction analyst (Fairhurst, 2004), while intertextuality might concern an institutionalist or critical discourse analyst (Phillips et al., 2004).

Forms of ODA also vary in how they study text and context, as well as one or multiple levels of analysis (e.g. interpersonal, organizational, institutional, societal). There is less emphasis on interviews, and more emphasis on recorded interaction where transcripts may be subject to coding schemes, coded for themes, or carefully prepared for intensive analysis by the researchers themselves.

Work by Cooren et al. (2008) showcased video-ethnographic methods, which is increasingly being adopted by ODA scholars, especially to study the organizing potential of language, texts, and other objects. Some 42 hours of video recording revealed how both human and nonhuman agents coproduced and ‘made present’ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF, a.k.a. ‘Doctors Without Borders’) in the war torn Democratic Republic of the Congo, Africa. This study is yet another example of the overlap between the study of processual views of organizing and issues of materiality. ODA revealed how MSF’s presence was a continual negotiation and mobilization of people, logos, vehicles, buildings, and more.

The study of *relational and subtle power processes* differs from the organizing potential of language and texts. To untangle the workings of power, ODA scholars with critical and postmodern leanings focus on discursive formations, which are groups of statements that reflect a system of thought embedded in discursive practices. Indeed, discursive formations are macro-level phenomena only realizable in micro-discursive practices. As such, it leads discourse analysts to look for sites of struggles among diverse forms of knowing, being, and speaking (Broadfoot et al., 2004).

For example, Cloud (2005) explored contradictions between the participatory, egalitarian rhetoric of capitalist discourse versus its economic and physical realities. She conducted a narrative analysis of an industrial conflict in locked-out workers' newsletters, finding that changes in workers' discourses from 'warrior' to 'victim' to 'martyr' demonstrated shifts in capitalist power relations that obscured the economic basis for union action.

Postmodern scholars focus on the ways that meanings shift or carry the seeds of their own transformation (Weedon, 1997), or the diverse ways that discourse constructs subjectivities. Consider Ziegler (2007) who found that the discourse of wildland firefighting, located in historic and contemporary documents, created multiple subject positions for firefighters: benevolent leaders, heroic saviors, self-aware servants, obedient rule followers, or critical-thinking team members that had changed little over the past 50 years.

Within this same arena, ODA lends itself to juggling multiple discursive methods and multiple levels of context, much as Wodak et al.'s (2011) study of autocratic and egalitarian leaders' impact on creating consensus in an aerospace firm demonstrated. Based on 150 hours of meetings and individual interviews, they studied the organization's structural context, the history of specific communities of practice, and a close discursive analysis of meeting interaction, the latter revealing several influential acts of organizing impacting the creation of a durable consensus.

ODA scholars will also deploy multilevel, multimethod approaches often through intertextuality (Kristeva, 1984). With intertextual analysis, analysts can focus on how texts interconnect, how texts embed themselves within other texts, or the interplay of current texts with past conversations (Broadfoot et al., 2004). Phillips et al. (2004) advocate exactly this kind of analysis for a proposed model of institutionalization based on the

emergence of institutional entrepreneurs who create influential texts of organizational sensemaking and legitimacy that layer and interweave.

Finally, to study *issues of materiality*, ODA targets objects, sites, and bodies (Ashcraft et al., 2009; Cook & Brown, 1999). *Objects* have matter, form, and properties of a 'temporarily permanent' quality (Orlikowski, 2000). They cannot easily be categorized by their physical characteristics, since their properties and exact matter often change, such as we see in the case of the physicality of information technology (Leonardi, 2012). Technology also reflects how not all of an object's features are relevant to every user or practice; hence ODA directs itself to how an object's materiality is made applicable through discourse and communication.

Sites reflect physical spaces, locations, or the materiality of place. ODA eschews treating physical spaces as boundaries, backdrops, or containers in which interactions transpire; rather, they shape and are shaped by social action (Halford, 2008). As with objects, ODA studies space through its affordances, how the social and spatial mutually implicate one another, and the network of meanings negotiated through these entanglements (Burrell & Dale, 2003; Dale & Burrell, 2008). Cooren et al.'s (2008) aforementioned study of MSF in the Congo, for example, provided a stark site contrast with that of its Paris headquarters. One space was marked by the enduring trappings of a formal organization (e.g. building, signage, bureaucratic forms), while the other was marked by the ephemerality of white Toyotas, the MSF logo, and identity cards, all of which spoke on behalf of MSF, but in very different ways.

ODA also concerns itself with *bodies*, its practices, its struggles, and the ways in which organizations construct themselves through and with the body. ODA targets the ways in which bodies materialize in discursive struggles of gendered workplace practices (Butler, 1993; Wolkowitz, 2006), or the ways

in which universal, disembodied workers emerge in early discourses of safety, health, and security in the workplace (Levenstein & Wooding, 1997; Wolkowitz, 2006). ODA stresses embodied experiences and the symbolism of the body rather than highly glossed typifications, such as in the occupations or professions (Ashcraft, 2013).

Some forms of ODA grant explicit agency to objects, sites, and bodies, while others do not (Cooren, 2006). For those that do, emphasis is given to how they make a difference, through their affordances in their human entanglements, even though they may lack the ability to symbolize or be reflective (Taylor & Van Every, 2000).

To summarize, the theories and methods by which ODA studies processual views of organizing, relational and subtle manifestations of power, and issues of materiality are wide-ranging, and many approaches are still in their infancy. ODA is also increasingly moving toward new methods such as video-ethnography, the use of multiple methods, and attempts to capture multilevel contexts. In different ways, they all encourage interrogating the discursive struggles over meaning in rich and interesting ways. In the following section, we introduce five of the most popular forms of ODA.

HOW CAN ODA BE IMPLEMENTED IN ITS VARIOUS FORMS?

In this section, we review five prominent forms of ODA, namely rhetoric, ethnomethodology-informed conversation analysis, narratology, critical discourse analysis, and the CCO (communication as constitutive of organization) approach. We present each tradition according to its basic tenets, representative work, the types of questions it answers, specifically as they relate to processual views of organizing and issues of power and materiality, and its limitations. Table 6.1 summarizes these methods.

Rhetoric

Defined by Aristotle as ‘the faculty of discovering in any particular case all the available means of persuasion’, rhetoric sometimes suffers from negative connotations in ordinary language, e.g. charges of manipulation, double talk, or deception. In keeping with Aristotle’s view, however, rhetoric should also be understood as the art of eloquence, i.e. that which is persuasive, but also touching and elegant (Burke, 1969).

Rhetoric, as the art of speaking or writing, mixes three primary means of persuasion. Aristotle identified them as: (1) *ethos*, which is the rhetor’s capacity to establish credibility, (2) *pathos*, which involves the emotions the rhetor arouses, and (3) *logos*, which is the logical or reasoned dimension of the rhetor’s discourse. While rationalists like Jürgen Habermas (1984) prioritize *logos* over *ethos* and *pathos*, rhetoricians point out that credibility and emotionality are key elements of discourse, and they should not be minimized a priori (Cooren, 2000). Rhetors not only rely on the power of logical arguments (*logos*) but they also often simultaneously establish their credibility (*ethos*) and strike an emotional chord (*pathos*) in order to persuade (Hoffman & Ford, 2010).

However, rhetoric is not only about persuasion and argumentation, but also *constitution*. Maurice Charland (1987, 1990), a proponent of *constitutive rhetoric*, argued that one of the problems with conceiving of rhetoric solely as persuasion and argumentation is that it may take the audience for granted. Instead, the audience should also be considered the *outcome* or product of rhetorical processes. Drawing from Burke (1969) and Althusser (1971), Charland (1987) argued that rhetors come to implicitly or explicitly define *who they and the others are* and *what they and the others are supposed to do* in a given situation. Relying on ‘common sensations, concepts, images, ideas [and] attitudes’ (Burke, 1969, p. 21), constitutive rhetoric unveils the facts, principles, ideas, and values that support and

Table 6.1 Five forms of organizational discourse analysis

<i>Forms of Organizational discourse analysis (ODA)</i>				
	<i>Basic tenets</i>	<i>Key questions</i>	<i>Limitations</i>	<i>Representative work</i>
Rhetoric	Issues of ethos, pathos, and logos, but the audience must also be the <i>outcome</i> of rhetorical processes Rhetors define <i>who they and the others are and what they and the others are supposed to do</i> in a given situation	(1) How discourse constitutes certain identities, images, audiences, and cultures (2) How rhetorical acts legitimate certain organizational values, principles, or norms over others	Rhetorical studies are less sensitive to the dynamic aspects of interaction and thus processual views of organizing	Chaput et al. (2011); Christensen & Cornelissen (2011); Leonardi & Jackson (2004)
Ethnomethodology and conversation analysis (EMCA)	People make sense of the world to one another and meaningfully co-construct the circumstances in which they are involved	(1) How interactions signal the organization's presence, without resorting to macro structures (2) How interactions reflexively enact certain organizational realities over others (3) How the question of materiality always depends on what comes to <i>matter</i> in a given situation	EMCA tends to have a restricted view of the (organizational) context It also tends to treat power as relevant only if actors make it relevant	Boden (1994); Cooren (2007); Fairhurst (2007a, 2007b); Gromm (1983); Heritage (1997); Larsson & Lundholm (2010, 2013); Samra-Fredericks (2003)
Narratology	Narratives are always about particular events occurring over a specific period of time Narratives 'organize' by privileging some actors, spaces, and temporalities over others Telling a story must deal with a breach of certain norms and/or the overcoming of obstacles toward goal achievement. Narratives express how people think of a given situation and how it should be treated normatively	(1) How discourse contributes to the articulation of various sequences of action (2) How these articulations amount to positioning certain organizational values, principles, or norms as superseding others (3) How narratives highlight what matters and does not matter to storytellers, in turn, enabling sensemaking and closure	Narratology runs the risk of communicating a single relationality when relationships are, by definition, co-defined and contestable	Boje (1991, 2001); Cooren (2000); Czarniawska (2004); Czarniawska & Gagliardi (2003); Fisher (1984); Gabriel (2004); Gioia et al. (2013); Maitlis & Christianson (2013); Taylor & Van Every (2000); Vaara et al. (2016); Weick et al. (2005)

Critical discourse analysis (CDA)	CDA examines the <i>conditions of possibility</i> of a given discourse or ideology, i.e. what makes it possible, or sometimes impossible, in terms of what is said, how it is said, and who is authorized to say it Questions of power and resistance are thus always at stake in CDA because of the performative dimension of discourse, i.e. its capacity to privilege or reaffirm certain realities over others	(1) What and how specific discourses constitute organizational life (2) How certain organizational realities and subject positions are systematically and repeatedly privileged by these discourses (3) How economic, institutional, or technological materialities participate in the constitution and reproduction of these ideologies and the privileging of specific interests over others	CDA tends to reproduce a classical distinction between discourse and social structures or between discourse and materiality	Ashcraft & Mumby (2004); Cloud (2005); Fairclough & Thomas (2004); Fairhurst (2007a); Hardy & Thomas (2014); Medved & Kirby (2005); Wodak et al. (2011)
Communication as constitutive of organization (CCO)	Communicating consists of establishing links or relations between various beings, while also recognizing that these links or relations are themselves beings through which this communication can take place Communication is not only a matter of people interacting with each other, it is <i>the way by which relations or links take place</i> , but only between human beings, but also between texts, organizations, or even situations they represent	(1) What voices populate a given discourse, whether these voices are facts presented as <i>speaking for themselves</i> , situations portrayed as <i>dictating specific courses of action</i> , or principles defined as <i>requiring particular decisions</i> (2) <i>In the name of what or who</i> someone or something appears to say things, that is, the various voices that it, he, or she claims to represent, i.e. make present	CCO tends to neglect questions of power and longitudinality, where the staging and weight of various voices could be assessed and analyzed over time	Cooren (2004, 2010, 2015, 2016); Cooren et al. (2012); Cooren & Sandler (2014); Matte & Cooren (2015); Robichaud et al. (2004); Taylor & Cooren (2006); Taylor & Van Every (2000, 2011, 2014); Vásquez (2013)

are supported by the positions people take (Chaput et al., 2011) that, in turn, define and legitimate organizational identities, images, audiences, and cultures.

Organizational scholars use both traditional and constitutive rhetorical approaches to understand situations of uncertainty or possibility (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2011); when message intent is ambiguous for the speaker or audience (Leonardi & Jackson, 2004); when source credibility (ethos) is problematic; when the audiences for messages are unclear or complex (Sillince, 2006); how organizations form legitimating arguments for decision making with multiple stakeholders in mind (Erkama & Vaara, 2010; Green et al., 2009); and assessing the ethics and values of persuasive campaigns (Heath, 2011; Meisenbach & Feldner, 2011).

Rhetoric thus addresses: (1) how discourse constitutes certain identities, images, audiences, and cultures; and (2) issues of power vis-à-vis how these rhetorical acts legitimate certain organizational values, principles, or norms over others. Relatively little rhetorical work explores issues of materiality (cf. Cheney & Cloud, 2006; Cloud, 2005); however, there is nothing prohibitive about using it to study the organizational objects, sites, and bodies of rhetorical situations (Ashcraft et al., 2009).

In terms of limitations, rhetorical studies focus heavily on institutionalized forms of communication (e.g. formal speeches, official documents, public forums, and so on) and are less sensitive to the dynamic aspects of interaction and thus processual views of organizing (Cooren, 2015).

Ethnomethodology/Conversation Analysis

While rhetoric often targets more institutionalized forms of communication, ethnomethodology-informed conversation analysis (hereafter, EMCA) focuses on *discourse-in-interaction*. Ethnomethodology literally means the study

(-logy) of the methods, procedures, or techniques (-methodo-) that people (*ethno*-) use to make sense of their worlds in and through social interaction (Garfinkel, 1967). Founded in the 1950s by Harold Garfinkel, ethnomethodology not only revolutionized sociology but also influenced conversation analysis, a sister discipline initiated by Harvey Sacks (1992). While ethnomethodology is not exclusively interested in the detailed study of social interaction, conversation analysts were among the first to systematically study how people interact with each other in naturally occurring, recorded conversations (Levinson, 1983).

In EMCA, people make sense of the world to one another and meaningfully co-construct the circumstances in which they are involved. Garfinkel's (1967) notion of *accountability* is illustrative because interactants are not 'judgmental dopes', but knowledgeable of their motives and logics for action. They can readily account for their actions (i.e. explain and justify them), even when others struggle to do so, because they operate from within the context of the interaction itself. Studying interaction from an EMCA perspective therefore consists of focusing on what people are doing while interacting, moment-by-moment, turn-by-turn. EMCA thus emphasizes how interactants implicitly or explicitly: (1) *position* themselves and others; (2) *orient* to contextual relevancies; (3) *invoke* specific procedures, norms, values, documents, objects, and so on; and (4) *define* situations, relationships, and identities (Cooren, 2012).

As such, EMCA also involves a constitutive view of discourse. The participants themselves establish the context of a given conversation. Following Heritage (1984), context is 'something *endogenously* generated within the talk of the participants and, indeed ... something created in and through that talk' (Heritage, 1984, p. 283, emphasis in original). Moreover, organizations are also *talked into being* (Heritage, 1984) on the terra firma of interaction (Cooren, 2006), whose configurations have organizing potential.

Organizational forms (re-)produce themselves in people's interactional and sequential moves.

Such work builds upon seminal work on EMCA in institutional settings such as that by Boden (1994), Heritage (1997), and Gronn's (1983) classic 'talk as the work', study of the micro-understandings and sensemaking as it unfolded in a school administration. More recently, Samra-Fredericks (2003) used EMCA to study organizational strategy sessions, while Cooren's (2007) EMCA analysis of a corporate board meeting charged with leadership succession enabled Fairhurst (2007b) to demonstrate how leadership attributions take shape sequentially. Larsson and Lundholm (2010, 2013) studied the organizing properties of leadership in bank interactions, and Cooren et al. (2012) used EMCA to study the interactive objects of a building manager's walk-through with technicians.

EMCA thus addresses questions related to processual views of organizing and materiality: (1) how discourse-in-interaction signals the organization's presence, without resorting to macro structures (Boden, 1994); (2) how these interactions amount to reflexively performing certain organizational realities over others; and (3) how the question of materiality always depends on what comes to *matter* in a given situation, as any situation is at least partly defined and constituted by the way people enact, orient to, and make sense of it.

In terms of limitations, EMCA has been criticized for a restricted view of the (organizational) context (Cooren, 2007; Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004; Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001). Despite the quality and detail of the analyses regarding the organizing structure of conversations, it could do more to analyze the nature of organization (Taylor & Van Every, 2000). It has also been criticized for treating power as relevant only if actors make it relevant, unlike the view of critical discourse analysts who believe power issues are ubiquitous (Fairhurst, 2007a).

Narratology

The analysis of narrative has certainly been among the most popular forms of ODA over the past thirty years (Brown, 2006; Czarniawska, 2004; Czarniawska & Gagliardi, 2003). Organizing and narrating have a lot in common as both deal with establishing relations and accounting for events, activities that trigger *sensemaking* and *closure* (Taylor & Robichaud, 2007). Among the ten features of narratives that Bruner (1991) identified, we examine four of the most important: diachronicity, particularity, canonicity, and referentiality. All demonstrate how narratives participate in the constitution of organizing and organization.

First is *diachronicity*, which means that narratives are always about particular events occurring over a specific period of time (Bruner, 1991). They have a beginning, middle, and an end, which circumscribe and organize what is related. In any narration, however, certain events will be left out due to constraints of space, time, or agency (Greimas, 1987).

Particularity, a second narrative feature, implies that some choices be made vis-à-vis: (1) circumference or the spatial context in which action unfolds (Burke, 1962 [1945]); (2) periodicity, which are start and stop time frames; and (3) agency, including nonhuman agency, i.e. who or what makes a difference as events unfold. Narratives 'organize' vis-à-vis acts of selection that privilege some actors, spaces, and temporalities over others (Mumby, 1987).

Third is *canonicity*, by which Bruner (1991) means that narratives must have a point to be 'tellable'. Telling a story is not a neutral activity; it must deal with a breach or violation of certain norms and/or the overcoming of obstacles toward goal achievement (Cooren, 2015; Greimas, 1987). In constructing narratives, members knowingly or unknowingly reinforce norms and values by showing how an *order* is restored through the overpowering of impediments

and opponents. A narrative will tend to be selective not only in terms of space, time, and agency, but also in terms of specific standards, beliefs, or principles, which can reveal a great deal about organizational norms and values.

Fourth is *referentiality*, which refers to the way a specific situation comes to be defined or identified by the stories people tell of it (Bruner, 1991). Since relating an event is never a neutral activity, stories allow situations to *express themselves* in a specific way depending on who is telling them (Cooren, 2010). From a constitutive viewpoint, narratives express how people think of a given situation and how it should be treated normatively; hence, the familiar ‘moral of the story’ moment with most narratives.

Narratology can be used not only to analyze how people’s stories express and contribute to the constitution of organizations, but also how their actions and conversations hierarchically articulate with each other to form collective action with a sense of closure (Cooren & Fairhurst, 2004; Taylor & Van Every, 2000). Specifically, analyzing organizational discourse from a narrative perspective reveals how people implicitly or explicitly define situations by first identifying a breach, violation, or problem and subsequently how resolving it produces closure. A narrative’s organizing potential thus reveals itself in its sequentiality, and in the way that sequences of action imbricate or embed within each other (Cooren & Fairhurst, 2004; Taylor & Van Every, 2000).

Narratology thus addresses such questions as: (1) how discourse contributes to the articulation of various sequences of action; (2) how these articulations amount to positioning certain organizational values, principles, or norms as superseding others; and (3) how narratives highlight what matters (human or nonhuman) and does not matter to storytellers, in turn, enabling sensemaking and closure. Thus, in different ways than EMCA, narrative analyses also focus on processual views of organizing.

Narrative studies abound on almost every organizational topic, but they are especially prominent in research on organizational change, leadership, identities, and sensemaking (Boje, 1991, 2001; Czarniawska, 2004; Czarniawska & Gagliardi, 2003; Fisher, 1984; Gabriel, 2004; Gioia et al., 2013; Maitlis & Christianson, 2013; Taylor & Van Every, 2000; Vaara et al., 2016; Weick et al., 2005). However, one limitation of narrative analysis is that it runs the risk of communicating a single relationality when relationships are, by definition, co-defined and contestable (Gabriel, 2004).

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (hereafter, CDA) can take many forms, but they all prioritize issues of power. Some forms of CDA emphasize the operations of ideology (Althusser, 1971) and a more totalizing view of power, while others adopt a postmodern influence with Foucault’s (1975) discursive and relational view of power and resistance (Mumby, 2014). Either way, CDA examines the *conditions of possibility* of a given discourse or ideology, i.e. what makes it possible, or sometimes impossible, in terms of what is said, how it is said, and who is authorized to say it (Fairclough, 2005). Questions of power and resistance are thus always at stake in CDA precisely because of the performative dimension of discourse, i.e. its capacity to privilege or reaffirm certain realities over others.

To reveal this performativity, Fairclough (1992, 1995, 2005) recommends a text-oriented discourse analysis involving three dimensions: (1) text, (2) discursive practice, and (3) social practice. The *textual* dimension of a discourse corresponds to what is verbalized or written to produce it (e.g. an organizational vision statement). Analyzing a discourse as a *discursive practice* amounts to focusing on how a text is produced and interpreted, i.e. processes of text production,

distribution, and consumption (e.g. the circulation or promotion of the vision statement). Finally, discursive events are analyzed as instances of broader *socio-cultural practices* (e.g. visionary leadership). Each of these three dimensions is intended to map onto one another to examine relations of power (e.g. through the ways in which managers, owners, or shareholders use an organizational vision statement to mask their interests).

Drawing from Fairclough (1992, 1995, 2005), CDA has been used to examine the economic realities associated with the discourse of globalization (Fairclough & Thomas, 2004) and conflicts between management and labor (Cloud, 2005), along with critical leadership practices in producing consensus (Wodak et al., 2011). More postmodern analyses have studied the subjectivities and fallen status of airline pilots (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004), executive coaching discourses that subjugate female leaders and alpha males in very different ways (Fairhurst, 2007a), and corporate mothering discourses that create new positions for stay-at-home moms (Medved & Kirby, 2005).

CDA thus addresses such power and materiality laced issues as: (1) what and how specific discourses constitute organizational life, i.e. how organizational practices are constantly traversed by ideologies and regimes of truth, which surface in what people say, write, and do; (2) how certain organizational realities and subject positions are systematically and repeatedly privileged by these discourses; and (3) how economic, institutional, or technological materialities participate in the constitution and reproduction of these ideologies and the privileging of specific interests over others.

In terms of limitations, CDA has been accused of reproducing a classic distinction between discourse and social structures (see, especially, Fairclough, 1992) or between discourse and materiality (Hardy & Thomas, 2015). This is contrary to a constitutive view of discourse that emphasizes the material dimension of discourse (Barad,

2007; Orlikowski & Scott, 2009, 2014), as well as the discursive dimension of structures (Cooren & Fairhurst, 2009). In other words, CDA is susceptible to an old-fashioned way of conceiving structures and materiality in overly reified terms, which might be explained by its Marxist/Marxian roots (Althusser, 1971).

THE CCO (COMMUNICATION AS CONSTITUTIVE OF ORGANIZATION) APPROACH

A relatively newer approach put forth by scholars, mostly from the Montreal School of Organizational Communication (Brummans, 2006; Brummans et al., 2014), adopts a *relational ontology* (Barad, 2007; Robichaud, 2006), which places communication, not just discourse, at the forefront of theorizing processual views of organizing and organizational ontology. Although the CCO approach has often been used to analyze discourse-in-interaction (Cooren, 2004; Cooren & Sandler, 2014; Fairhurst, 2007a; Matte & Cooren, 2015; Robichaud et al., 2004; Taylor & Cooren, 2006; Vásquez, 2013), the distinction between discourse and communication is an important one for this perspective (Jian et al., 2008a, 2008b).

Communicating, according to this approach, consists of establishing links or relations between various beings, while also recognizing that these links or relations are themselves beings through which this communication can take place. Accordingly, communication is not only a matter of people interacting with each other. It is, more generally, *the way by which relations or links take place*, not only between human beings, but also between, for example, texts, organizations, or even situations they represent. This is why we can (figuratively) say that a situation – say, poor management – can *speak to* another situation – say, employee morale. In other words, these two realities *connect*,

relate, or *link* to each other because a poor form of management might allegedly *express itself* when managers speak to employees, which might result in the decreasing of morale.

According to Cooren (2010, 2015, 2016), communication can be compared to a form of ventriloquism, i.e. acts by which various beings are *made to say things*. In the organizational world, these beings can take the form of numbers, graphs, figures, indexes, facts, reports, mission statements, principles, protocols, or programs, i.e. as many *sources of authority* that are supposed to lend their weight to specific courses of action. As pointed out by Taylor and Van Every (2000, 2011, 2014), authority is intimately connected with the notion of authoring (they both come from the Latin root *auctor*, which means the father, source, or origin), which shows that gaining in authority amounts to multiplying the authors of what appears to be one's own positions.

In terms of discourse analysis, a ventriloquism-based approach unveils the voices that populate a given discourse, whether these voices are facts presented as *speaking for themselves* (Cooren, 2008), situations portrayed as *dictating specific courses of action* (Follett, 1926) or principles defined as *requiring particular decisions* (Cooren, 2010). Studying discourse according to this perspective thus amounts to identifying *in the name of what or who* someone or something (a text, for instance) appears to speak, that is, the various voices that it, he, or she claims to represent, i.e. make present.

Regarding the question of materiality, the Montreal School opposes any distinction between a discursive world and a material world, as any discourse has, by definition, to materialize itself in order to exist. Materiality must be understood relationally, that is, as expressing what or who sustains or supports the existence of something or someone else (Cooren et al., 2012). Echoing key tenets of sociomateriality (see, especially, Orlikowski & Scott, 2014), the ventriloquist perspective

thus highlights that discourse is a key way by which *materialization* actually takes place.

In terms of limitations, the CCO perspective, especially the one associated with the Montreal School, has often been accused of neglecting questions of power and longitudinality (but see Cooren et al., 2007). In other words, its focus on the detailed study of interaction has often been operated at the expense of more longitudinal studies where the staging and weight of various ventriloquized voices could be assessed and analyzed (Cooren, 2015).

CONCLUSION

In one way or another, the aforementioned discursive methods enable the study of processural views of organizing, relational and subtle manifestations of power, and the relationship between discourse and materiality. However, they do so in different ways. For example, CDA *always* foregrounds issues of power and politics; its theories stem from the power-laced writings of Marx, Althusser, Foucault, and many others. However, EMCA waits for organizational actors to make these issues salient, following in the tradition of ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967). EMCA values actors' views so strongly that they believe analysts are the only ones who can carefully produce transcripts of interaction, while the other methods have no such preferences. CDA likewise concerns itself with economic and institutional materialities, while some forms of narratology appear more open to the technical and physical world, given the theorizing of Greimas (1987).

Moreover, these forms of ODA are not 'pure' in the sense that they continually evolve and cannot necessarily claim a specific type of discourse analysis as their own; rather, they adopt familiar themes. As mentioned, rhetoric has now broadened its scope with 'constitutive rhetoric' (Charland, 1987,

1990), although there continues to be a heavy emphasis on persuasion, legitimacy, and argumentation. EMCA studies discourse-as-it-happens, and the everyday-ness of communication in organizations. Narratology remains broad and flexible across numerous domains of study, even for those lacking discursive sensitivities. Finally, CDA's move to enroll postmodern sensibilities broadens its appeal considerably by viewing power and resistance as inseparable in struggles over meaning both large and small.

Thus, it is not uncommon to see different forms of ODA meeting at the crossroads. Cloud's (2005) CDA of a labor dispute contained elements of rhetoric and narrative. As mentioned, she studied the stories of locked-out labor workers' newsletters (narrative), a more institutionalized form of communication with an intended audience (rhetoric), but focused on the eclipse of its rhetorical impact wrought by financial disparities (critical). The scholars advancing a CCO approach are pushing the boundaries of EMCA and narratology to consider nonhuman agency, advanced by actor-network theory (Latour, 1994).

In addition to addressing issues of materiality, analysts are increasingly combining discursive methods with grounded theory methods, such as work by Kreiner and colleagues (2015) who study varied forms of category work (EMCA) in organizational identification first produced by constant comparison. Also, work by Sheep et al. (2017) used grounded theory methods to understand organizational tensions, but relied on EMCA to refrain from separating them and analyzing them independently to focus on their 'knotted formulations'.

The possibilities of discursive methods notwithstanding, there are, of course, limitations. One of the chief limitations leveled at ODA in the past has been an overemphasis on language (Conrad, 2004; Reed, 2000). Of course, there is ample evidence in this review that discourse analysts are beginning to address this issue in much more serious ways. However,

we should expect the growth of ODA to move more forthrightly in this direction, much the way CCO analysts and others are now using video-ethnographic methods (Cooren et al., 2008, 2012) to capture the physicalities of organizational life.

A second limitation associated with ODA involves the issue of 'scaling up' from very localized interactions to broader organizational phenomena (Cooren & Fairhurst, 2009). This also translates to too much of an interest in *organizing*, and not enough on *organization* and more institutionalized stabilities (McPhee, 2004). Addressing this issue will require discourse analysts to adopt more multilevel and, perhaps, multimethod approaches not just to examine how organizations are 'brought off' in social interaction but, simultaneously, how they are also objects of knowledge whose agency is communicated in and through reflection and interpretation (Foucault, 1975), much like discursive leadership (Fairhurst, 2007a).

Finally, a third limitation associated with ODA is that it can be costly and labor intensive. Video-ethnographic methods, for example, exceed the costs of grounded theory methods and standard transcript preparation; they also place new demands on journal publications to consider video and photographic evidence.

Limitations aside, ODA methods are informed by a great deal of interdisciplinary work that is exciting and holds promise for almost every aspect of organizational life. Indeed, ODA arguably brings life to the study of organizations.

REFERENCES

- Althusser, L. (1971). *Lenin and Philosophy*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Alvesson, M. and Kärreman, D. (2000). Varieties of discourse: On the study of organizations through discourse analysis. *Human Relations*, 53(9), 1125–49.

- Ashcraft, K. L. (2013). The glass slipper: 'Incorporating' occupational identity in management studies. *Academy of Management Review*, 38(1), 6–31.
- Ashcraft, K. L. and Mumby, D. K. (2004). *Reworking Gender: A Feminist Communicationology of Organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ashcraft, K. L., Kuhn, T. and Cooren, F. (2009). Constitutional amendments: 'Materializing' organizational communication. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 3(1), 1–64.
- Axley, S. R. (1984). Managerial and organizational communication in terms of the conduit metaphor. *Academy of Management Review*, 9(3), 428–37.
- Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press.
- Berger, P. and Luckman, T. L. (1966). *The Social Construction of Knowledge: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Boden, D. (1994). *The Business of Talk: Organizations in Action*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Boje, D. (1991). The storytelling organization: A study of story performance in an office supply firm. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 36(1), 106–26.
- Boje, D. (2001). *Narrative Methods for Organizational and Communication Research*. London: Sage.
- Broadfoot, K., Deetz, S. and Anderson, D. (2004). Multilevelled, multi-method approaches in organizational discourse. In D. Grant, C. Hardy, C. Osrick, N. Phillips and L. Putnam (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Discourse* (pp. 193–211). London: Sage.
- Brown, A. D. (2006). A narrative approach to collective identities. *Journal of Management Studies*, 43(4), 731–53.
- Brummans, B. H. J. M. (2006). The Montreal School and the question of agency. In F. Cooren, J. R. Taylor and E. J. Van Every (Eds.), *Communication as Organizing: Empirical and Theoretical Explorations in the Dynamic of Text and Conversation* (pp. 197–211). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Brummans, B. H. J. M., Cooren, F., Robichaud, D. and Taylor, J. R. (2014). Approaches in research on the communicative constitution of organizations. In L. L. Putnam and D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *SAGE Handbook of Organizational Communication* (pp. 173–94). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bruner, J. (1991). The narrative construction of reality. *Critical Inquiry*, 18(1), 1–21.
- Burke, K. (1962 [1945]). *A Grammar of Motives*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Burke, K. (1969). *A Rhetoric of Motives*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Burrell, G. and Dale, K. (2003). Building better worlds: Architecture and critical management studies. In M. Alvesson and H. Willmott (Eds.), *Studying Management Critically* (pp. 177–96). London: Sage.
- Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of 'sex'*. New York: Routledge.
- Chaput, M., Brummans, B. H. J. M. and Cooren, F. (2011). The role of organizational identification in the communicative constitution of an organization: A study of consubstantialization in a young political party. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 25(2), 252–82.
- Charland, M. (1987). Constitutive rhetoric: The case of the *Peuple québécois*. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 73(2), 133–50.
- Charland, M. (1990). Rehabilitating rhetoric: Confronting blindspots in discourse and social theory. *Communication*, 11(4), 253–64.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory*. London: Sage.
- Cheney, G. and Cloud, D. L. (2006). Doing democracy, engaging the material. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 19(4), 501–40.
- Chouliarakis, L. and Fairclough, N. (2010). Critical discourse analysis in organizational studies: Towards an integrationist methodology. *Journal of Management Studies*, 47(6), 1213–18.
- Christensen, L. T. and Cornelissen, J. (2011). Bridging corporate and organizational communication: Review, development and a look to the future. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 25(3), 383–414.
- Cloud, D. L. (2005). Fighting words: Labor and limits of communication at Staley, 1993 to 1996. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 18(4), 509–42.

- Collinson, D. L. (1988). 'Engineering humour': Masculinity, joking, and conflict in shop-floor relations. *Organization Studies*, 9(2), 181–99.
- Conrad, C. (2004). Organizational discourse analysis: Avoiding the determinism-volunteerism trap. *Organization*, 11(3), 427–39.
- Cook, S. D. N. and Brown, J. S. (1999). Bridging epistemologies: The generative dance between organizational knowledge and organizational knowing. *Organization Science*, 10(4), 381–400.
- Cooren, F. (2000). Toward another ideal speech situation: A critique of Habermas' reinterpretation of speech act theory. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 86(3), 295–317.
- Cooren, F. (2004). The communicative achievement of collective minding: Analysis of board meetings excerpts. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 17(4), 517–51.
- Cooren, F. (2006). The organizational world as a plenum of agencies. In F. Cooren, J. R. Taylor and E. J. Van Every (Eds.). *Communication As Organizing: Empirical and Theoretical Explorations in the Dynamic of Text and Conversation* (pp. 81–100). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Cooren, F. (Ed.). (2007). *Interacting and Organizing: Analyses of a Board Meeting*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Cooren, F. (2008). The selection of agency as a rhetorical device: Opening up the scene of dialogue through ventriloquism. In E. Weigand (Ed.), *Dialogue and Rhetoric* (pp. 23–37). Amsterdam / Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.
- Cooren, F. (2010). *Action and Agency in Dialogue*. Amsterdam / Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.
- Cooren, F. (2012). Strategizing talk and text. *Strategy as Practice: Theories, Methodologies and Phenomena*. Retrieved from <https://hstalks.com/t/2381/strategizing-talk-and-text/?business>.
- Cooren, F. (2015). *Organizational Discourse*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Cooren, F. (2016). Ethics for dummies: Ventriloquism and responsibility. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 24(1), 17–30.
- Cooren, F. and Fairhurst, G. T. (2004). Speech timing and spacing: The phenomenon of organizational closure. *Organization*, 11(6), 797–828.
- Cooren, F. and Fairhurst, G. T. (2009). Dislocation and stabilization: How to scale up from interactions to organization. In L. L. Putnam and A. Nicotera (Eds.), *Building Theories of Organization: The Constitutive Role of Communication* (pp. 117–52). New York: Routledge.
- Cooren, F. and Sandler, S. (2014). Polyphony, ventriloquism, and constitution: In dialogue with Bakhtin. *Communication Theory*, 24(3), 225–44.
- Cooren, F., Brummans, B. and Charrieras, D. (2008). The coproduction of organizational presence: A study of Médecins Sans Frontières in the Democratic Republic of Congo in action. *Human Relations*, 61(10), 1339–70.
- Cooren, F., Fairhurst, G. T. and Huët, R. (2012). Why matter always matters in organizational communication. In B. Nardi, P. M. Leonardi and J. Kallinikos (Eds.), *Materiality and Organizing: Social Interaction in a Technological World* (pp. 433–59). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Cooren, F., Matte, F., Vásquez, C. and Taylor, J. R. (2007). A humanitarian organization in action: Organizational discourse as an immutable mobile. *Discourse and Communication*, 1(2), 153–90.
- Czarniawska, B. (2004). *Narratives in Social Science Research*. London: Sage.
- Czarniawska, B. and Gagliardi, P. (Eds.). (2003). *Narratives We Organize By*. Amsterdam Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.
- Dale, K. and Burrell, G. (2008). *Spaces of Organization and the Organization of Space: Power, Identity and Materiality at Work*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Deetz, S. A. (1992). *Democracy in an Age of Corporate Colonization: Developments in Communication and the Politics of Everyday Life*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Derrida, J. (1988). *Limited Inc.* Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Erkama, N. and Vaara, E. (2010). Struggles over legitimacy in global organizational restructuring: A rhetorical perspective on legitimization strategies and dynamics in shutdown case. *Organization Studies*, 31(7), 813–39.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Longman.

- Fairclough, N. (2005). Peripheral vision: Discourse analysis in organization studies: The case for critical realism. *Organization Studies*, 26(6), 915–39.
- Fairclough, N. (2006). *Language and Globalization*. New York: Routledge.
- Fairclough, N. and Thomas, P. (2004). The discourse of globalization and the globalization of discourse. In D. Grant, C. Hardy, C. Oswick, N. Phillips and L. Putnam (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Discourse* (pp. 379–96). London: Sage.
- Fairhurst, G. T. (2004). Textuality and agency in interaction analysis. *Organization*, 11(3), 335–53.
- Fairhurst, G. T. (2007a). *Discursive Leadership: In Conversation with Leadership Psychology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fairhurst, G. T. (2007b). Liberating leadership in corporation after Mr. Sam: A response. In F. Cooren (Ed.), *Interacting and Organizing: Analyses of a Board Meeting* (pp. 53–71). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Fairhurst, G. T. and Cooren, F. (2004). Organizational language in use: Interaction analysis, conversation analysis, and speech act schematics. In D. Grant, C. Hardy, C. Oswick, N. Phillips and L. Putnam (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Discourse* (pp. 131–52). London: Sage.
- Fairhurst, G. T. and Putnam, L. L. (2004). Organizations as discursive constructions. *Communication Theory*, 14(1), 5–26.
- Fairhurst, G. T. and Putnam, L. L. (2014). Organizational Discourse Analysis. In L. L. Putnam and D. Mumby (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Communication* (pp. 271–96). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fairhurst, G. T., Green, S. G. and Courtright, J. A. (1995). Inertial forces and the implementation of a socio-technical systems intervention. *Organization Science*, 6(2), 168–85.
- Fisher, W. R. (1984). Narration as a human communication paradigm: The case of public moral argument. *Communication Monographs*, 51(1), 1–22.
- Fleming, P. and Spicer, A. (2008). Beyond power and resistance: New approaches to organizational politics. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 21(3), 301–9.
- Follett, M. P. (1926). The giving of orders. In H. Metcalf (Ed.), *Scientific Foundations of Business Administration* (pp. 29–37). Baltimore, MD: Williams & Wilkins.
- Foucault, M. (1975). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). New York: Vintage.
- Foucault, M. (1983). The subject and power. In H. L. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow (Eds.), *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (pp. 208–26). Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1998). *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge*. London: Penguin.
- Gabriel, Y. (2004). Narratives, stories, and texts. In C. H. D. Grant, C. Oswick, N. Phillips and L. Putnam (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Discourse* (pp. 61–77). London: Sage.
- Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Gergen, K. (2001). *Social Construction in Context*. London: Sage.
- Gioia, D. A., Patvardhan, S. D., Hamilton, A. L. and Corley, K. G. (2013). Organizational identity formation and change. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 7(1), 123–93.
- Grant, D., Putnam, L. L. and Hardy, C. (2011). History, key challenges, and contributions of organizational discourse studies. In D. Grant, C. Hardy and L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *Organizational Discourse Studies* (pp. xvii–xlii). London: Sage.
- Green, S. E., Li, Y. and Nohria, N. (2009). Suspended in self-spun webs of significance: A rhetorical model of institutionalization and institutionally embedded agency. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52(1), 11–36.
- Greimas, A. J. (1987). *On Meaning: Selected Writings in Semiotic Theory*. London: Frances Pinter.
- Gronn, P. (1983). Talk as the work: The accomplishment of school administration. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28(1), 1–21.
- Habermas, J. (1984). *The Theory of Communicative Action: Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Halford, S. (2008). Sociologies of space, work and organization: From fragments to spatial theory. *Sociology Compass*, 2(3), 925–43.
- Hardy, C. and Thomas, R. (2015). Discourse in a material world. *Journal of Management Studies*, 52(5), 680–96.

- Heath, R. L. (2011). External organizational rhetoric: Bridging management and sociopolitical discourse. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 25(3), 415–35.
- Heritage, J. (1984). *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Heritage, J. (1997). Conversation analysis and institutional talk. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice* (pp. 161–82). London: Sage.
- Hoffman, M. F. and Ford, D. J. (2010). *Organizational Rhetoric: Situations and Strategies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Jayyusi, L. (1984). *Categorization and the Moral Order*. Boston, MA: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Jian, G., Schmisser, A. and Fairhurst, G. T. (2008a). Organizational discourse and communication: The progeny of Proteus. *Discourse & Communication*, 2(3), 299–320.
- Jian, G., Schmisser, A. and Fairhurst, G. T. (2008b). The debate about organizational discourse and communication: A rejoinder. *Discourse & Communication*, 2(3), 353–5.
- Kreiner, G. E., Hollensbe, E. C., Sheep, M. L., Smith, B. R. and Kataria, N. (2015). Elasticity and the dialectic tensions of organizational identity: How can we hold together while we are pulling apart? *Academy of Management Journal*, 58(4), 981–1011.
- Kristeva, J. (1984). *Revolution in Poetic Language*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Larsson, M. and Lundholm, S. E. (2010). Leadership as work-embedded influence: A micro discursive analysis of an everyday interaction in a bank. *Leadership*, 6(2), 159–84.
- Larsson, M. and Lundholm, S. E. (2013). Talking work in a bank: A study of organizing properties of leadership in work interactions. *Human Relations*, 66(8), 1101–29.
- Latour, B. (1994). On technical mediation: Philosophy, sociology, genealogy. *Common Knowledge*, 3(2), 29–64.
- Lee, T. W. (1999). *Using Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Leonardi, P. M. (2008). Indeterminacy and the discourse of inevitability in international technology management. *Academy of Management Review*, 33(4), 975–84.
- Leonardi, P. M. (2012). Materiality, sociomateriality, and socio-technical systems: What do these terms mean? How are they different? Do we need them? In P. Leonardi, B. Nardi and J. Kallinikos (Eds.), *Materiality in Organizations* (pp. 25–48). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Leonardi, P. M. and Jackson, M. H. (2004). Technological determinism and discursive closure in organizational mergers. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 17(6), 615–31.
- Levenstein, C. and Wooding, J. (Eds.). (1997). *Work, Health, and Environment: Old Problems, New Solutions*. New York: Guilford.
- Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Maitlis, S. and Christianson, M. (2013). Sense-making in organizations: Taking stock and moving forward. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 8(1), 57–125.
- Matte, F. and Cooren, F. (2015). Learning as dialogue: An on-the-go approach to dealing with organizational tensions. In L. Filliettaz and S. Billett (Eds.), *Francophone Perspectives of Learning through Work* (pp. 169–88). Geneva, Switzerland: Springer.
- Medved, C. E. and Kirby, E. (2005). Family CEOs: A feminist analysis of corporate mothering discourses. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 18(4), 435–78.
- McPhee, R. D. (2004). Text, agency, and organization in the light of structuration theory. *Organization*, 11(3), 355–71.
- Meisenbach, R. J. and Feldner, S. B. (2011). Adopting an attitude of wisdom in organizational rhetorical theory and practice: Contemplating the ideal and the real. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 25(3), 560–8.
- Mumby, D. K. (1987). The political function of narrative in organizations. *Communication Monographs*, 54(2), 113–27.
- Mumby, D. K. (2005). Theorizing resistance in organization studies: A dialectical approach. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 19(1), 19–44.
- Mumby, D. K. (2014). Critical theory and postmodernism. In L. L. Putnam and D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Communication: Advances in Theory, Research, and Methods* (pp. 101–26). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Orlikowski, W. J. (2000). Using technology and constituting structures. *Organization Science*, 11(4), 404–28.

- Orlikowski, W. J. and Scott, S. V. (2009). Sociomateriality: Challenging the separation of technology, work and organization. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 2(1), 433–74.
- Orlikowski, W. J. and Scott, S. V. (2014). What happens when evaluation goes online? Exploring apparatuses of valuation in the travel sector. *Organization Science*, 25(3), 868–91.
- Phillips, N., Lawrence, T. B. and Hardy, C. (2004). Discourse and institutions. *Academy of Management Review*, 29(4), 635–52.
- Potter, J. and Wetherell, M. (1987). *Discourse and Social Psychology*. London: Sage.
- Putnam, L. L. and Fairhurst, G. T. (2001). Discourse analysis in organizations. In F. M. Jablin and L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The New Handbook of Organizational Communication* (pp. 78–136). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Reed, M. (2000). The limits of discourse analysis in organization analysis. *Organization*, 7(3), 524–30.
- Robichaud, D. (2006). Steps toward a relational view of agency. In F. Cooren, J. R. Taylor and E. J. Van Every (Eds.), *Communication as Organizing: Empirical and Theoretical Explorations in the Dynamic of Text and Conversation* (pp. 101–14). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Robichaud, D., Giroux, H. and Taylor, J. R. (2004). The meta-conversation: The recursive property of language as the key to organizing. *Academy of Management Review*, 29(4), 617–34.
- Sacks, H. (1992). *Lectures on Conversation*, vols. 1 and 2. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Samra-Fredericks, D. (2003). Strategizing as lived experience and strategists' everyday efforts to shape strategic direction. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(1), 141–74.
- Schatzki, T. R. (2005). The sites of organizations. *Organization Studies*, 26(3), 65–484.
- Sewell, G., Barker, J. R. and Nyberg, D. (2012). Working under intensive surveillance: When does 'measuring everything that moves' become intolerable? *Human Relations*, 65(2), 189–215.
- Sheep, M. L., Fairhurst, G. T., & Khazanchi, S. (2017). Knots in the discourse of innovation: Investigating multiple tensions in a reacquired spin-off. *Organization Studies*, 38(3–4), 463–88.
- Sillince, J. A. A. (2006). Resources and organizational identities: The role of rhetoric in the creation of competitive advantage. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 20(2), 186–212.
- Sorsa, V., Pälli, P. and Mikkola, P. (2014). Appropriating the words of strategy in performance appraisal interviews. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 28(1), 56–83.
- Taylor, J. R. and Cooren, F. (2006). Making worldview sense: And paying homage, retrospectively, to Algirdas Greimas. In F. Cooren, J. R. Taylor and E. J. Van Every (Eds.), *Communication as Organizing: Empirical and Theoretical Explorations in the Dynamic of Text and Conversation* (pp. 115–38). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Taylor, J. R. and Robichaud, D. (2007). Management as metaconversation: The search for closure. In F. Cooren (Ed.), *Interacting and Organizing: Analyses of a Management Meeting* (pp. 5–30). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Taylor, J. R. and Van Every, E. J. (2000). *The Emergent Organization: Communication at its Site and Surface*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Taylor, J. R. and Van Every, E. J. (2011). *The Situated Organization: Case Studies in the Pragmatics of Communication*. New York: Routledge.
- Taylor, J. R. and Van Every, E. J. (2014). *When Organization Fails: Why Authority Matters*. New York: Routledge.
- Tracy, S. J. (2013). *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Vaara, E., Sonenshein, S. and Boje, D. (2016). Narratives as sources of stability and change in organizations: Approaches and directions for future research. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 10(1), 495–560.
- Vásquez, C. (2013). Spacing organization (or how to be here and there at the same time). In D. Robichaud and F. Cooren (Eds.), *Organization and Organizing: Materiality, Agency, and Discourse* (pp. 127–49). New York: Routledge.
- Weedon, C. (1997). *Feminist practice and post-structuralist theory* (2nd ed.). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

- Weick, K. E., Sutcliffe, K. M. and Obstfeld, D. (2005). Organizing and the process of sense-making. *Organization Science*, 16(4), 409–21.
- Wodak, R., Kwon, W. and Clarke, I. (2011). 'Getting people on board': Discursive leadership for consensus building in team meetings. *Discourse and Society*, 22(5), 592–616.
- Wolkowitz, C. (2006). *Bodies at Work*. London: Sage.
- Ziegler, J. A. (2007). The story behind an organizational list: A genealogy of wildland firefighters' 10 standard fire orders. *Communication Monographs*, 74(4), 415–42.

Towards the Wholesome Interview: Technical, Social and Political Dimensions

Bill Lee and Usman Aslam

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is about individual interviews, rather than either group or focus group interviews, that will have different characteristics and dynamics. Interviews of individuals have been taking place in different settings for different purposes for a number of centuries and across the social sciences for research purposes for over 100 years (Alvesson & Ashcraft, 2012; Denzin, 2001; Herzog, 2005; Platt, 2001). Thus, most people would be aware that an interview often entails a verbal exchange that enables the interviewer to obtain information from the interviewee to allow the interviewer to use that information to realise a given objective. Such is their commonplace nature some commentators have suggested that we now live in an interview society in which all are individuals that may use the technology of the interview to narrate the self (Atkinson & Silverman, 1997; see also: Alvesson & Ashcraft, 2012,

p. 239; Denzin, 2001, p. 28; Gubrium & Holstein, 2001).

Despite their popularity in being used in 90 per cent of social science investigations (Denzin, 2001, p. 23), there is very little agreement about many aspects of research interviews. The dominant positivist tradition has often conceived interviews as simple technical exercises that the interviewer uses in a neutral and apolitical way so as not to bias responses or contaminate the procedure when pursuing a higher good of value-free knowledge. As Gubrium and Holstein (2001, p. 19) have said of this tradition:

Interviewers are generally expected to keep their 'selves' out of the interview process. *Neutrality* is the byword. Ideally, the interviewer uses his or her interpersonal skills when meeting to encourage the expression of, but not to help construct, the attitudes, sentiments and information in question. (*Italics in original*)

However, this perspective's implicit social (Dundon & Ryan, 2010; Holstein & Gubrium,

1995; Humphrey & Lee, 2008; Myers & Newman, 2007) and political assumptions (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016; Kezar, 2003; Kvale, 2006, 2007) have been challenged.

The contribution of this chapter is to synthesise these different challenges with considerations about the technical qualities to put forward an argument for wholesome interviews in which an interviewer acts with honest intent in aligning their input into the social, political and technical dimensions of interviews. In conducting this exercise, we tend towards a realist ontological position and an interpretivist epistemology. The former leads us towards believing that humans have an inner essence that is expressed in their values, and while we acknowledge the possibility of mutation, change and development *over time*, we reject the ease of fluidity, contradiction and multiplicity of character implied of researchers in some research perspectives. Our choice of an interpretivist epistemology is an acknowledgement that neither values nor meanings expressed by humans are universal and it is possible for different researchers to look at the same phenomenon, adopt different interpretations of the same events and offer different explanations for the outcomes.

In putting forward our argument, we use the term wholesome for two reasons. First, the concept of wholesome suggests pursuit of a balance of the different dimensions of an interview. Second, the idea of the wholesome interview assumes a desire to promote wellbeing for the interviewer, for the interviewee and for the research community. In considering the interviewer, recognition that each will have different identities – for example, as a parent, colleague, community participant and worker – in other spheres of his/her life is not to argue that people are completely fractionated with one part of a person's life having no impact on other parts. While sometimes roles of a person may conflict, individuals' inner essence demands some form of consistency across different dimensions of a life if that person is not to experience dissonance

and the discomfort and anguish that it brings (see also, Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016, p. 12; Nadin & Cassell, 2006, pp. 213–14). An interviewer's consistency across different spheres of his/her life is more likely to promote wellbeing in the interviewee. That is to say that consistent behaviour by the interviewer will preclude the interviewee having a sense of being misled if s/he finds out that the interviewer espouses one set of beliefs in one sphere of his/her life, but subscribes to a completely different set of values in another sphere of his/her life. Expression of different beliefs during the interview to those that the interviewer holds may be interpreted as a form of covert research. Such actions could lead to the interviewer failing to understand points from the belief system of the interviewee while being restricted in his/her capability to question the interviewee when they do not understand because of their earlier misrepresentations, leading to poorer quality data. It could also damage other researchers' opportunities to enter into the field (Punch, 1994). In putting forward these arguments for wholesome interviews, this chapter goes beyond others' suggestions that avoidance of harm to anyone is apt (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016, p. 23).

In promoting understanding of the technical, social and political dimensions that need to be synthesised in the course of an interview, we adopt the following definitions. We borrow from Jamous and Peliolle's (1970, p. 112) discussion of knowledge bases of occupations to define the technical dimensions of interviews as the 'means' that can be mastered and communicated in the form of rules' to gather the information to realise a given research objective. In effect, some dimensions of interviewing have been codified and may be found in methodological text books. With any activity, there is a difference between knowing the codes and enacting what the codes suggest. Interviews inevitably involve some form of *interaction* between the researcher and the person from whom information is sought. It is a social

activity in which both the interviewer and the interviewee can each choose from a range of actions during the interview, regardless of the preparation of the technical dimensions prior to the interview, and it is these interactions that have to be executed that constitute what are defined here as the social dimensions of interviews. Interviews can never be seen as a wholly neutral activity (see also, Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016, p. 6). Both the conduct of the interview and its outcome will mark a change from a situation that would have existed if the interview had not taken place. Ways in which change may take place are in the relationships between the interviewer, the interviewee and others. The political dimensions of an interview represent the power relationships between the different parties involved in an interview and others, and the ways in which these may be managed and transformed either in the course of the interview, or because the interview has taken place.

This chapter will proceed by discussing each of the technical, social and political dimensions of interviews in turn before making some concluding remarks. The way in which we have defined the technical, social and political dimensions may suggest that they are separate stages of an interview with the technical preceding the social and the social preceding the political. While acknowledging that the interview should be perceived as a process and each of the technical, social and political dimensions may appear to be more to the fore at different stages of an interview, the different dimensions are used for analytical purposes only. As will be evident in the discussion, all dimensions may manifest at each stage in the process.

TECHNICAL DIMENSIONS OF AN INTERVIEW

As indicated in the previous section, the technical dimensions of an interview are those

aspects that may be codified. Such codification means that the technical dimensions are often discussed in research methods text books. The following discussion will provide a brief overview of four issues that may be codified before introducing a fifth issue, that of making an interview wholesome.

Logic and Order of the Interview

A common taxonomy divides interviews into structured, semi-structured and unstructured according to the extent to which the interviewer ‘structures’ or directs the interview. Particular devices that help to attain structured or less structured interviews are closed-ended questions that predefine a limited range of responses that are permissible, and open-ended questions that invite expansive answers. Different commentators (e.g. Alvesson & Ashcraft, 2012, pp. 248–9; Cassell, 2015; Harvey, 2011; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Ng & Coakes, 2014) suggest ordering questions into different sections according to their relative importance in seeking an understanding of the phenomenon being investigated and their contribution to managing the social dimensions of the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. Jacob and Furgerson (2012, pp. 3–4) indicate that it is most useful to start with questions that the interviewee will find easy to answer, such as those designed to solicit information about the background of either the interviewee or the organisation to which they belong, or his or her role in the organisation. These questions not only help to set the interviewee at ease – or break the ice (Alvesson & Ashcraft, 2012, p. 249) – but they can also generate relevant context information. As the interview proceeds, questions that are essential to the substantive phenomena under investigation may be asked with the most difficult and controversial questions being located in the middle of the interview. Towards the end of the interview, there are likely to be questions that fall outside of what

the researcher has necessarily gleaned from their own prior experience and review of the literature. So it is not unusual for interviewers to invite comments on whether there is any issue relative to the phenomena being investigated that the interviewee believes should have been asked, but which was omitted, or whether there is anything else that the interviewee wishes to add (see also, Alvesson & Ashcraft, 2012, p. 250).

The Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions of the Researcher

There are a range of taxonomies used by different authors (for examples, see Alvesson & Ashcraft, 2012; Cassell, 2005, pp. 168–70) to articulate how people with different ontological and epistemological assumptions perceive and conduct interviews. The ontological assumptions of how the interviewer understands the world of which they are part may be interpreted simply by considering a single axis that ranges between realism, whereby a researcher views the world as a separate external reality to him/her and the interviewee, and constructivism, where the researcher perceives a phenomenon existing only in the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee, or between the interviewee and others with whom they interact. Epistemological assumptions of the relationship between investigators and the phenomenon that they study may be interpreted simply along a single axis between positivism, which assumes that a possibility of perceiving and measuring external phenomena in an objective way is free of any bias, and interpretivist stances that seek to understand the meanings that may be given to a phenomenon from the subjectivity of the participants.

Ontological and epistemological assumptions will affect what the researcher will see as important phenomena, the types of questions asked about a particular phenomenon

and the ways in which each question might be constructed to derive particular forms of information. Researchers towards the realist end of the ontological dimension, regardless of whether they are positivists or interpretivists, will view the interview as a technique that will access a comment – albeit one of a potential range from an interpretivist epistemology (e.g. Denzin 2001, p. 30) – on the external world. Researchers from a constructivist position will view interviews as a situated account in which interviewees either draw on ‘cultural resources to yield morally adequate justifications’ (Alvesson & Ashcraft, 2012, p. 243), or they will view each interview as producing a reality (Kezar, 2003; Limerick et al., 1996).

Research Design

Research design embraces the type of interview that the interviewer believes will enable him or her to address that research question which in turn will affect the subsequent method of analysis and the choice of whom to interview. Structured interviews are highly similar to questionnaires and are ignored here. Cassell (2015) has provided a recent disaggregation of semi-structured interviews into the following:

- Exploratory interviews that focus on an emergent issue from a range of different perspectives;
- Theoretical interviews where existing theories around a topic help to structure the research objective and the types of questions that are asked;
- Event-based interviews which involve asking the interviewee to focus on the importance of a particular event to explain a phenomenon;
- Comparative interviews that seek to understand the models that interviewees utilise when interpreting the relationship between different phenomena or the varying courses of a phenomenon in different circumstances;
- Narrative interviews that encourage interviewees to tell stories about their own experiences of organisational phenomena as a means to understanding how those interviewees make sense of their experiences;

- Biographical interviews which seek understanding of an interviewee's experiences by locating those experiences within a chronology of that interviewee's life history;
- Visual technique interviews which involve using pictures of different types as foci for interviewees to discuss their opinions and emotions surrounding what is portrayed.

Cassell describes unstructured interviews as phenomenological interviews which entail telling an interviewee about the topic of the research and simply inviting him or her to tell his or her story around that topic.

When choosing participants for an interview study, Alvesson and Ashcraft (2012, p. 247) suggest that there are two loose principles, namely representativeness and quality. Put simply, the aim will be to interview either a cross-section of people that will give a diversity of opinions on the phenomenon, or those who can provide the most insightful, informed or relevant view or example of the phenomenon under investigation. How the data is analysed and/ or presented will vary in part by the type of interview and in part by the type of account that the researcher wishes to provide. In some instances, such as in theoretical interviews when there is a desire to explore the prospective outcome of a policy change, the phenomena or the impact of the change may be taken as the unit of analysis and a form of thematic analysis may be utilised. If biographical interviews have been used to explore the impact of a change on particular groups, the unit of analysis may be the individual and a story-telling form of analysis may be used.

The Substantive Area or Discipline

An interview project will require a research question that has been at least partially influenced by reading sections of the literature in the discipline, although it might also be motivated by an issue of importance to the researcher for personal reasons. The research question will help to define the overall

objectives of the interview. Other issues informed by the literature or insights derived from the researcher's experience will provide further ideas for expansion of the interview's focus around the relationship between the phenomenon in which the interviewer is interested and other phenomena. Those issues will also help decide on the people to interview. One of the strengths of qualitative research is that unexpected issues often emerge in the course of the research and it is important that the researcher is flexible and sensitive to the need to adapt the design of the content as issues are revealed by the interviewees.

Considering How to Make the Interviews Wholesome

The technical aspects of interviewing may have been treated here as analytically separable, but they have social and political dimensions. For example, the ordering of questions can help to manage the interviewer's social relationship with research participants. The ontological assumptions will affect whether the researcher sees the possibility of external structures that could be oppressive, while epistemological assumptions about the possibility or otherwise of making value-free judgements will inform a researcher's view of what his/her responsibilities are if oppressive structures are observed. There are similar political dimensions when designing the research in deciding how to represent opinions of different parties to the research and in choosing the research area and the research questions to ask to facilitate the expression of a voice of particular groups. In this regard, this last sub-section could have been put at the start of the discussion as it is necessary for a researcher to ask him or herself a number of essentially political and social questions before embarking on a research study if s/he wishes to achieve a wholesome interview. These questions include: Do you believe that a group affected by your studies

suffer a disadvantage vis-à-vis others? What might be the source of that disadvantage? How might you help to overcome that disadvantage? Do you want to help that group? On a social level, the questions that might be asked before embarking on a project include: Do you belong to the community that you wish to research? If not, can you gain access to that community? Will you like the people in that community sufficiently to interact with them? How will you manage interaction with them and what are the issues to consider when managing that interaction? It is to the social dimensions of interviews that this chapter now turns.

SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF AN INTERVIEW

As indicated above, a research interview involves an interaction between a minimum of two people who may not know each other. The types of interaction will be different according to the approach to interviewing that is assumed, which may in turn be influenced by factors such as the ontological assumptions of the researcher, i.e. whether he or she views him or herself as co-constructing knowledge with their research participants, the interviewer and interviewee's relative knowledge of the topic and their assumed role in the interview. Different authors (e.g. Duff, 2002; Granott, 1993) offer classifications of different orders and objectives in interview situations. These may include simple questioning of one party by another to allow the researcher to construct understanding individually, or forms of collaboration to operationalise each other's different spheres of knowledge to realise a joint objective, such as in action research where researchers may work with practitioners to realise a stated shared goal (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014).

Regardless of its exact form, the interactions make interviews, by definition, a social

activity. Even though the researcher may have prepared an interview schedule of questions based on the technical knowledge and converted that schedule into an interview protocol (see, for example, Jacob & Furgerson, 2012) with reminders about providing explanations of the objectives of a project and the conduct of other tasks such as securing consent from the interviewee, etc., the interview still needs to be executed. There is, however, a difference between knowing the codes to follow for doing something and being able to turn the ideas and codes into action. Doing requires the exercise of a form of knowing that Polanyi (1962) describes as tacit, as not everything can be expressed explicitly for pre-codification. Even implementation of codes will involve competencies and adeptness that are assumed and implicit rather than explicit. It is not surprising that some authors describe doing the interview as an accomplishment (Myers & Newman, 2007, p. 5) or performance (Denzin, 2001).

The idea of a performance is also manifest in dramaturgical analyses of interview situations (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016, pp. 15–17; Gubrium & Holstein, 2001, p. 28; Hermanns, 2004; Myers & Newman, 2007). To a lesser (e.g. Hermanns, 2004) or greater (e.g. Myers & Newman, 2007) degree of explication, those who adopt this approach draw on Goffman's dramaturgical sociology. Goffman drew a comparison between routine social phenomena and theatrical performance. To follow the detailed description provided by Myers and Newman (2007, p. 11), the interview is the performance of a drama at the front of the stage – although over time, interviewers may be allowed to the interviewee's backstage area (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016) – according to a script composed by one of the actors, namely the researcher, as both the interviewer and the interviewee play out their respective roles. The merits of this approach do highlight that the interviewer role is different from other roles that the same person may hold in other parts of his/her life and the performance of the role implies working

with others to construct the outcome of the interview. There are, however, a number of problems with this form of analysis. The first one is that while there may be expectations of the role that interviewers and interviewees may play, only one of them has a script, so the analogy is not wholly applicable as the role of the interviewer is not simply to act out a part, but it also often involves directing the other party. More significantly – and is acknowledged by some (Myers & Newman, 2007) – the idea of the interviewer playing out a role could encourage feigning or acting out human qualities such as interest in what the interviewee is saying, naivety when wanting the interviewee to provide an explanation of a situation or empathy with the dilemmas that face the interviewee. The contention here is that while the interviewer may have to adopt a persona that is suitable for spending an extensive time in the company of someone whom s/he has never met, or only met on one or two occasions – and which is different from the way in which s/he may act most of the time – the central essence of the interviewer's character is likely to remain unchanged, even if the interviewer's knowledge and understanding is enhanced. In other words, in a wholesome interview, the selection of a topic that is of genuine interest to the interviewer and which promotes affinity and sympathy with the research participants is paramount and is more likely to promote rapport with research participants than feigning sympathy and empathy.

Closely aligned with dramaturgical approaches to the social interaction involved in an interview is an emergent literature on rapport (Dundon & Ryan, 2010; Garbarski et al., 2016; see also Harvey, 2011; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Garbarski et al. (2016, p. 5) provide three definitions of rapport as a sense of affinity, expression of non-verbal and verbal behaviours, or co-ordination and synchronisation in interaction. Both Dundon and Ryan (2010) and Garbarski et al. (2016) propose ways in which rapport may be constructed to facilitate better information

gathering, although Dundon and Ryan also warn of a danger of over-rapport which could lead to collection of non-research related tales or information that the interviewee thinks the interviewer wishes to hear. If, however, the core of rapport is seen as a shared sense of affinity so the expression of behaviours and the liking for forms of co-ordination in interaction is simply a product of that affinity, there is a problem with the argument that both Dundon and Ryan and Garbarski et al. put forward. That is, rapport is based on mutuality and cannot be generated by one party. Ironically, Dundon and Ryan's paper illustrates that the foundations of mutual affinity precede the social interaction in the interview and stem from shared interests, political affiliations, mutual acquaintances and senses of humour. Thus, a wholesome approach to interviewing encourages interviewers to pick a research question which itself generates affinity between themselves and their research participants.

For this reason, one of the authors – Bill – has often expressed affinity with particular parties that have an interest in the phenomenon that is being researched prior to the interview taking place. For example, in the work that Bill has conducted with Catherine Cassell (e.g. Lee & Cassell, 2008, 2011; Cassell & Lee, 2009, 2012) around trade union learning representatives (ULRs), it was not unusual for the interviewers to explain to the many respondents who were ULRs that the interviewers were sympathetic to the introduction of ULRs. In this context, preparation of initial reports from an early part of that programme of research and a subsequent publication of a report by *TUC Unionlearn* (Lee & Cassell, 2009) that could be given to the respondents also provided a means of adding to trust so that a shared affinity could be established at the start of the interviews.

When conducting interviews, there is a range of factors to consider that could impact on the quality of the social relationship. One of these is the medium through which the interview will take place. In addition to the

face-to-face interactions – that have been assumed here – interviews may take place over the telephone (Harvey, 2011, pp. 435–6), electronically through such mechanisms as emails, internet forums, discussion groups and chatrooms (Morgan & Symon, 2004) and through Skype. The social relationship between the researcher and the interviewee will be different when these media are used. For example, Morgan and Symon (2004, p. 28) describe the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee as disembodied and de-contextualised when electronic means are used. The medium for the interview and the social relationship that follows may affect the quality of the information that is shared. For example, Harvey (2011, p. 439) suggests that the absence of full social interactions in telephone interviews can have a detrimental effect on the confidence of the interviewee that the information will be kept confidential (cf. Cachia & Millward, 2011). By contrast, there may be many advantages and positive effects including enhanced responses around difficult topics and protection afforded to vulnerable groups by the anonymity that may be realised through electronic methods (Morgan & Symon, 2004, p. 24; Willis, 2012). The use of media such as Skype has the benefit of permitting interviews to be conducted even when there are great distances between the interviewer and the interviewee, but it can affect the quality of the social relationship. Hence, we would suggest that in most circumstances, it is easiest to establish and demonstrate the shared affinity essential to a wholesome interview when the first contact is face-to-face.

A final consideration around the social dimensions of an interview is where it takes place. There is not a special time and space for interviews as they are rarely a routine part of interviewees' normal days. So interviews often take place in a space that has been designed for other purposes. As Herzog (2005, p. 35) indicates, this will involve the interviewer crossing boundaries into other domains of the interviewee's life where work

or domestic life commitments will regulate the interviewee's behaviour. While this may provide insights into other parts of an interviewee's life, the location of the interview could result in disruptions that affect the quality of the information that is collected. We have always found disruptions and entering unexpected social interactions with others to be useful. For example, in the research into ULRs described above, Bill was often sat in an office, interviewing a trade union learning convenor, when a ULR or a learner would enter the learning convenor's office. The interruption would provide an opportunity both to observe the operation of the scheme and to have an informal discussion with that other person about the ULR project. Of course, there are times when the interruptions may not facilitate learning more about a project. In one interview, an interviewee had to receive a phone call about his wife who was in hospital. The interruption obviously involved a break in the interviewee's train of thought and he requested that he be reminded of what he had been talking about. Having the genuine interest in the topic that is necessary for wholesome interviews can help the interviewer recount where the discussion had reached.

As we have indicated above, while the social dimensions may be analytically separable from the technical and political dimensions, they overlap in practice. There are, for example, political dimensions to the choice of where to conduct the interview. Interviewees' being able to choose the location helps to equalise relationships between the interviewer and the interviewee. It is to the dimensions of an interview that are most significantly political that we now turn.

POLITICAL DIMENSIONS OF AN INTERVIEW

As indicated above, there are inevitably political dimensions to interviews because

interviewees and interviewers are involved in relationships with one another and with others who might be affected by the research. In considering political dimensions, this chapter is informed by Gramsci's (1971) ideas that academics do not form a separate and self-contained group of intellectuals, but those who espouse ideas of any description are intellectuals that are aligned with one or more groups in society. The nature of that alignment is based on whether the ideas that are articulated serve to protect a society which benefits some groups rather than others, or whether the ideas articulated seek to change that society to move away from unjust inequality. Three dimensions of political relationships of interviews will be considered here. The first is the interpersonal relationship and a requirement for the interviewer not to be exploitative of the interviewee in the interview situation. The second is whether the interview situation may be transformative *per se*. The third is the interventions that the interviewer may make to help bring about change that is beneficial or disadvantageous to the interviewees.

In considering the first issue, interviews have been described as a 'gift' or 'privilege' (Denzin, 2001, p. 24; Limerick et al., 1996). These are useful metaphors because they highlight that the interviewee is giving something to the interviewer. In many cultures, there is the expectation of some form of reciprocation in research, even if it is just sharing of personal details (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016, p. 9; Walker et al., 2006). Such expectations should be contrasted with concerns that interviews are essentially asymmetrical in the power relationship which gives rise to patterns of exploitation (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001; Kvale, 2006; Limerick et al., 1996; Tanggaard, 2007). The interviewer sets the agenda, controls the exchange between the parties and decides on how knowledge produced by the interview may be presented. The interviewer may also be the person who receives the most immediate gratification from the interview exchange.

As Kvale (2007, pp. 55–6) argues, although interviewees may sometimes find the opportunity to discuss their lives as enriching, an alternative feeling is one where the interviewee 'has given much information about his or her life and may not have received anything in return'. The interviewee is also reliant on the researcher to act with a proper duty of care with that information (Gattrell, 2009). Similarly, the researcher, rather than the interviewee, obtains the longer-term benefits of the interview. Except in some types of action research (e.g. Rod, 2011), interviewees may gain little from the research, but published outputs from the research project may benefit the researcher's academic career. Issues surrounding the disparate power relationship in the interview situation are accentuated when deception on the part of the researcher is involved. Cunliffe and Alcadipani (2016, pp. 17–21) suggest that deception and non-deception are not binary categories, but fall along continua which they break into three. First, there is impression management where props such as the provision of potted histories are used to gain gatekeepers' approval, and the choice of special clothing may serve to deceive. Second, there is the extent to which the goals of the research and the particular groups' interests that those goals serve are revealed or withheld. Third, there is the extent to which the accounts produced of the research are fully 'truthful' when they are based on selection and exclusion of some of the information collected.

As it is the interviewer who constructs the unequal relationships, some authors propose redress of the disparate power relationships through a range of mechanisms. For example, Limerick et al. (1996) suggest ways of shifting power away from the interviewer to the interviewee including: negotiating over the interview schedule; allowing the interviewee to choose the time, setting and method of recording and whether to terminate the interview; the provision of transcripts and articles for reading and commenting before publication; and generally being accessible after the

interview. Such analysis is accompanied by advice about being prepared to be challenged throughout the interview process and adoption of modes of behaviour to reduce social differences. An alternative suggestion around addressing disparate power relationships in the interview situation is provided by Ben-Ari and Enosh (2012) who argue for indirect reciprocation. Ben-Ari and Enosh (2012) suggest that the efforts made by interviewers to equalise power relationships between themselves and interviewees are relatively superficial, and the disparate relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee is not only inevitable but can also be helpful in generating curiosity about the other as a prelude to seeking understanding. Rather than focusing simply on the dyadic relationship between the interviewer and interviewee with the aim of seeking direct reciprocation between the two, Ben-Ari and Enosh argue that it is necessary to set that relationship in the context of a common goal. This effectively creates a third party and triadic relationships involving the third party and the interviewer and interviewee. It is then possible to acknowledge that reciprocation will not be realised through the direct relationship between the interviewer and interviewee, but will instead be derived indirectly via the third party within the triad.

Ben-Ari and Enosh's account suggests that the third party in the triad is a collective interest when what has been argued above is that many projects may support some groups at the expense of others, and assumptions of indirect reciprocation are not sufficient in wholesome interviews. While the idea of wholesome interviews that is proposed here supports the principles of seeking to conduct interviews in ways that are not oppressive or exploitative, it rejects the idea that researchers may be involved in deception when they have not revealed everything that they know about their project to everyone that they come into contact with. Pursuing a wholesome interview would involve having no intent to deliberately mislead people.

Actions such as adopting a particular type of attire when conducting research interviews are often intended as akin to respecting the traditions of a community that one is visiting, which could facilitate the interviewees taking the research more seriously. Omission of part of the explanation of the research often arises because qualitative researchers do not know all that they hope to reveal (Collins, 2008). Not including all of the evidence collected in written reports is inevitable because of the sheer volume of qualitative research, but as long as there is not deliberate omission of pertinent data with an intention to mislead the reader and there has been an equal chance for all data to be included by reference to the terms of analysis appropriate for the objectives and documented methods of the paper, deception is unlikely to be a product of wholesome interviews.

There are, however, two other comments of importance here about the perceived nature of unequal relationship in interviews. The first is that the arguments above tend to focus on the interviewer-interviewee relationship and ignore the power relationship between the interviewee and wider society. This issue will be discussed later. The second is that the arguments tend to ignore situations where the interviewee is in a more powerful position than the interviewer. This is often the case with business and management research where interviewees are head of multinational corporations or partners in large accountancy or law firms, etc. and have considerable resources at their disposal to mobilise should they not like the research that is being conducted. More generally, there has been the development of a body of literature on interviewing elites (Harvey, 2011; Kezar, 2003; McDowell, 1998). These works tend to define elites by their qualities and position. Some of this work highlights that elite interviewees are less likely to accept the authority of the interviewer, but instead use their knowledge, both to prepare for the interview and to challenge the interviewer and seek control of the interview (Harvey, 2011, p. 439). Others suggest

that the interview is a tool for liberation. For example, Kezar (2003) argues that transformational elite interviews allow the interviewer to understand that interviewees may actually feel disempowered and also facilitate the interviewee reflecting on the prospective impact of their actions from different perspectives and whether they wish to be the type of person that perpetrates such an impact. While acknowledging that elite interviewees may challenge interviewers, especially when those interviewees perceive objections to their powerful position in the research, there must be serious doubts about the value of Kezar's arguments. Not only does her approach misunderstand the nature of structural power – which will be discussed further below – that is often reproduced through mechanisms that are too diffuse for any one individual to exercise any significant control in bringing about change, but it affords the interviewer with a status of a greater agent for change than the combined strength of oppressed groups and their allies that may mobilise against those mechanisms on a broad front.

It is now appropriate to address the relationships between the interviewees and other groups in society and the interventions that an interviewer may make to benefit one group or another. As indicated above, societies may be structured in ways that benefit some groups at the expense of others. In such a context, research projects can either challenge those relationships, or they can accept them. Neither is neutral, as each supports one party or another. While some academics who criticise the current order simply write up their research for academic audiences, this does not mean that an interviewer's responsibilities to interviewees end with the interview. There are a number of ways in which interviewers may challenge how the world is constituted as a consequence of the research that they have conducted. In the research into ULRs, discussed above, that Bill conducted with Catherine Cassell, ULRs provide a challenge to traditional ways in which learning opportunities have been distributed within

corporations because they seek to provide opportunities to develop through their workplace to people who had previously been denied such opportunities. The ULR initiative was, thus, clearly designed to benefit those who previously had limited learning opportunities at work. In the course of this project, Bill and Cathy made a number of interventions to support the ULR initiative. These included: reporting back to the participants; speaking at an event organised by the TUC to which numerous trade union officials had been invited to share expertise with them; writing a report in non-academic language, using many quotes of ULRs, to help popularise the scheme; advising individual trade unions on the merits of the scheme; providing different trade unionists with examples of learning agreements that had been negotiated in support of ULRs at different organisations so that they could formulate their own; writing references in support of funding of individual ULR initiatives for their proponents; and providing written accounts of the UK scheme to proponents of comparable schemes in other countries.

Another project that both Usman and Bill are involved in currently addresses the political inequalities that exist between academics in different countries. After the Second World War, the English language was established as lingua franca for business, cultural and academic endeavours. This was aided by national English publishers, especially of textbooks and handbooks, gaining new markets so Anglo-American authors gained influence beyond their national audiences and became international (Gobo, 2011). This resulted in ethnocentric knowledge about research methods that had been local to a Western context becoming perceived as universally appropriate and suitable for research elsewhere (Gobo, 2011). Consequently, the default assumption of English as a universal language was instrumental in the increasingly widespread adoption of particular methods developed in the West and the preclusion of the development of alternative indigenous

research approaches. As Gobo (2011, p. 419) argues, accounts of research methods mainly written by American experts have been ‘tacitly described, proposed, and publicized as context-free knowledge, as useful and appropriate tools for studying every culture’. In response, there have been calls for the development of ‘glocalistic’ methods that can fuse sensitivity to local conditions with the generation of knowledge that may have broader or global applicability (Gobo, 2011; Lee, 2015), in part to overcome disadvantages suffered by academics that do not have English as their first language and to generate knowledge that is of most use to those outside of countries where English is used predominantly. We are currently engaged in an interview study that seeks to understand the ways in which Western assumptions around epistemology, ontology, theory and method affect the course of projects conducted elsewhere in the world. Our intention is to prevent such factors becoming the means of exercising a form of intellectual imperialism. One of the interventions that we are committed to making is the preparation of teaching materials that will enable the development of glocalistic research strategies for people who conduct research in one country but who address audiences in another.

The two projects discussed here may not be considered too much of a challenge to the most powerful groups in society. There are occasions when interviewers may generate evidence and arguments that those with existing power object to sufficiently to deploy resources to obstruct the research or to prevent its publication and use. This makes it essential that new researchers ensure that they observe the spirit of the ethical code of their own institution when carrying out research and keep records of how they observed ethical guidance so that they retain the support of their institution should their research lead to interventions by powerful opponents. In projects involving wholesome interviews, it is equally important for more experienced researchers to be clear when their research

is designed to challenge prevailing political relationships and to be prepared to be transparent about the intended consequences.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, we have argued for wholesome interviews that pursue alignment of technical, social and political considerations to promote positive outcomes for researchers, interviewees and the research community more generally. Our intention has not been to suggest that research participants do not have their own interests which may sometimes conflict with those of the researcher (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016, p. 2), but instead to suggest the means by which researchers may start from a position where those conflicts are most likely to be minimised and from which researchers may extricate themselves most easily when such conflicts arise and the researchers feel compromised.

Throughout this chapter, we have treated the technical, social and political dimensions as analytically separable but integral to one another in practice. For example, the choice of research questions is a political decision that will affect both the technical issue of which literature to review and the social question of which populations to interact with. Our definitions suggest that different qualities are necessary to realise competence in the respective dimensions of the technical, social and political. Competence in the technical dimension may be addressed by knowing the codes sufficiently well to design a well-executed research study. Expertise in the social dimension may be developed by selecting populations to research with whom the researcher has a prior affinity, anticipating issues and situations that may arise and rehearsing how to deal with those situations, although not in ways designed to mislead the interviewees. Execution of the political dimension will involve an understanding of one’s own values and reflection on the extent

to which one is prepared to accept the prevailing order, the changes that one wishes to see and having the courage to carry that forward when designing and conducting research projects.

A criticism that may be made of this chapter is that it may lead researchers to preclude studies of some agencies and areas that they disagree with (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016, p. 5). Obviously, this is a drawback, but what must be assessed is whether the information that could be collected by studying a site in a covert or less than wholesome way outweighs the costs and is better than having no information at all. Of course, not all researchers will have the same values and attach the same meanings to a single phenomenon. Thus, some information may be available from research conducted by others who do not share a particular researcher's values.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter has gone beyond simple classifications of interviews that focus purely on the technical types to provide an understanding of the alignment of the technical, social and political dimensions to achieve wholesome interviews. There may be occasions when it is not possible to achieve the alignment between the different dimensions of interviews that are advocated here. Exploration of the extent to which different interviews vary from the wholesome interviews along the dimensions identified will enable understanding of the suitability of alternatives to wholesome interviews for different situations that may face researchers when they design interview projects.

REFERENCES

- Alvesson, M. and Ashcraft, K.L. (2012) 'Interviews' in Symon, G. and Cassell, C. (eds.) *The Practice of Qualitative Organizational Research: Core Methods and Current Challenges*, London, Sage, pp. 239–57.
- Atkinson, P. and Silverman, D. (1997) 'Kundera's *Immortality*: The interview society and the invention of the self' in *Qualitative Inquiry*, Volume 3, Number 3, pp. 304–25.
- Ben-Ari, A. and Enosh, G. (2012) 'Power relations and reciprocity: Dialectics of knowledge construction' in *Qualitative Health Research*, Volume 20, Number 10, pp. 1–8.
- Cachia, M. and Millward, L. (2011) 'The telephone medium and semi-structured interviews: A complementary fit' in *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, Volume 6, Number 3, pp. 265–77.
- Cassell, C. (2005) 'Creating the interviewer: Identity work in the management research process' in *Qualitative Research*, Volume 5, Number 2, pp. 167–79.
- Cassell, C. (2015) *Conducting Research Interviews for Business and Management Students*, London: Sage.
- Cassell, C. and Lee, B. (2009) 'Trade unions learning representatives: Progressing partnership?' in *Work, Employment and Society*, Volume 23, Number 2, pp. 213–30.
- Cassell, C. and Lee, B. (2012) 'Driving, steering, leading and defending: Journey and warfare metaphors of change agency in trade union learning initiatives' in *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, Volume 48, Number 2, pp. 248–71.
- Coghlan, D. and Brydon-Miller, M. (eds.) (2014) *The SAGE Encyclopaedia of Action Research*, London: Sage.
- Collins, H. (2008) 'Qualitative methodology in practice: My experience' in Humphrey, C. and Lee, B. (eds.) *The Real Life Guide to Accounting Research: A Behind-the-Scenes View of Using Qualitative Research Methods, paperback edition*. Oxford, UK: Elsevier, pp. 481–90.
- Cunliffe, A.L. and Alcadipani, R. (2016) 'The politics of access in fieldwork: Immersion, backstage dramas and deception' in *Organizational Research Methods*, available online early view at <http://orm.sagepub.com/content/early/2016/04/13/1094428116639134.full.pdf+html>
- Denzin, N.K. (2001) 'The reflexive interview and a performative social science' in *Qualitative Research*, Volume 1, Number 1, pp. 23–46.

- Duff, P.A. (2002) 'The discursive co-construction of knowledge, identity and difference: An ethnography of communication in the high school mainstream' in *Applied Linguistics*, Volume 23, Number 3, pp. 289–322.
- Dundon, T. and Ryan, P. (2010) 'Interviewing reluctant respondents: Strikes, henchmen, and Gaelic games' in *Organizational Research Methods*, Volume 13, Number 3, pp. 562–81.
- Garbarski, D., Schaeffer, N.C. and Dykema, J. (2016) 'Interviewing practices, conversational practices, and rapport: Responsiveness and engagement in the standardized survey interview' in *Sociological Methodology*, available online early view at: <http://smx.sagepub.com/content/early/2016/04/04/0081175016637890.full.pdf+html>
- Gattrell, C. (2009) 'Safeguarding subjects? A reflexive appraisal of researcher accountability in qualitative interviews' in *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, Volume 4, Number 2, pp. 110–22.
- Gobo, G. (2011) 'Glocalizing methodology? The encounter between local methodologies' in *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, Volume 14, Number 6, pp. 417–37.
- Gramsci, A. (1971) *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Granott, N. (1993) 'Patterns of interaction in the co-construction of knowledge: Separate minds, joint effort, and weird creatures' in Wozniak, R.H. and Fischer, K.W. (eds.) *Development in Context: Acting and Thinking in Specific Environments*, London: Psychology Press, pp. 183–207.
- Gubrium, J.F. and Holstein, J.A. (2001) 'From the individual interview to the interview society' in Gubrium, J.F. and Holstein, J.A. (eds.) *Handbook of Interview Research*, London: Sage, pp. 3–32.
- Harvey, W.S. (2011) 'Strategies for conducting elite interviews' in *Qualitative Research*, Volume 11, Number 4, pp. 431–41.
- Hermans, H. (2004) 'Interviewing as an activity' in Flick, U., Von Kardorff, E. and Steinke, I. (eds.) *A Companion to Qualitative Research*, London: Sage, pp. 209–13.
- Herzog, H. (2005) 'On home turf: Interview location and its social meaning' in *Qualitative Sociology*, Volume 28, Number 1, pp. 25–47.
- Holstein, J.A., and Gubrium, J.F. (1995) *The Active Interview*. London: Sage.
- Humphrey, C. and Lee, B. (2008) *The Real Life Guide to Accounting Research: A Behind-the-Scenes View of Using Qualitative Research Methods*, paperback edition. Oxford, UK: Elsevier.
- Jacob, S.A. and Furgerson, S.P. (2012) 'Writing interview protocols and conducting interviews: Tips for students new to the field of qualitative research' in *The Qualitative Report*, Volume 17, T&L Art. 6, pp. 1–10.
- Jamous, H. and Peliolle, B. (1970) 'Changes in the French university-hospital system' in Jackson, J.A. (ed.) *Professions and Professionalization*, Cambridge, UK: University Press.
- Kezar, A. (2003) 'Transformational elite interviews: Principles and problems' in *Qualitative Inquiry*, Volume 9, Number 3, pp. 395–415.
- Kvale, S. (2006) 'Dominance through interviews and dialogues' in *Qualitative Inquiry*, Volume 12, Number 3, pp. 480–500.
- Kvale, S. (2007) *Doing Interviews*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lee, B. (2015) 'The handicap of lists, QROM and the future' in *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, Volume 10, Number 4, pp. 350–4.
- Lee, B. and Cassell, C. (2008) 'Employee and social reporting as a war of position and the union learning representative initiative in the UK' in *Accounting Forum*, Volume 32, Number 4, pp. 276–87.
- Lee, B. and Cassell, C. (2009) *Learning Representative Initiatives in the UK and New Zealand, A Comparative Study*, London: TUC Unionlearn.
- Lee, B. and Cassell, C. (2011) 'Learning to count: A challenge facing trade unions in their educational role' in *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, Volume 31, Number 5/6, pp. 287–301.
- Limerick, B., Burgess-Limerick, T. and Grace, M. (1996) 'The politics of interviewing: Power relations and accepting the gift' in *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, Volume 9, Number 4, pp. 449–60.
- McDowell, L. (1998) 'Elites in the City of London: Some methodological considerations' in *Environment and Planning A*, Volume 30, Number 12, pp. 2133–146.
- Morgan, S.J. and Symon, G. (2004) 'Electronic interviews in organizational research' in

- Cassell, C. and Symon, G. (eds.) *The Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*, London, Sage, pp. 23–33.
- Myers, M.D. and Newman, M. (2007) 'The qualitative interview in IS research: Examining the craft' in *Information and Organization*, Volume 17, Number 1, pp. 2–26.
- Nadin, S. and Cassell, C. (2006) 'The use of a research diary as a tool for reflexive practice: Some reflections from management research' in *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management*, Volume 3, Number 3, pp. 208–17.
- Ng, W. and Coakes, E. (2014) *Business Research: Enjoy Creating, Developing and Writing Your Business Project*, London: Kogan Page.
- Platt, J. (2001) 'The history of the interview' in Gubrium, J.F. and Holstein, J.A. (eds.) *The Handbook of Interview Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Polanyi, M. (1962) *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*, second edition, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Punch, M. (1994) 'Politics and ethics in qualitative research' in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 83–97.
- Rod, M. (2011) 'Subjective personal introspection in action-oriented research' in *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, Volume 6, Number 1, pp. 6–25.
- Tinggaard, L. (2007) 'The research interview as discourses crossing swords: The researcher and apprentice on crossing roads' in *Qualitative Inquiry*, Volume 13, Number 1, pp. 160–76.
- Walker, S., Eketone, A. and Gibbs, A. (2006) 'An exploration of kaupapa Maori research, its principles, processes and applications' in *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, Volume 9, Number 4, pp. 331–44.
- Willis, P. (2012) 'Witnesses on the periphery: Young lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer employees witnessing homophobic exchanges in Australian workplaces' in *Human Relations*, Volume 65, Number 12, pp. 1589–610.

Group Methods

Tracey M. Coule

INTRODUCTION

Over the last few decades, the use of group methods has become more prevalent within a diverse range of business and management disciplines, including but not limited to logistics (Rodrigues et al., 2010), business communications (Byers & Wilcox, 1991), information systems (Stahl et al., 2011), supply chain management (Rose-Anderssen et al., 2010) and marketing (Fern, 1982; Kehoe & Lindgren, 2003). This disciplinary based literature, however, has concerned itself primarily with the practice of the method, affording little attention to the diverse knowledge constituting assumptions that can underpin its use (although, see Calder, 1977; Rose-Anderssen et al., 2010; Stahl et al., 2011 for rare exceptions). Problematically, such a preoccupation with methods in isolation ‘obscures the link between the assumptions that the researcher holds and the overall research effort, giving the illusion that it is the methods themselves,

rather than the orientations of the human researcher, that generate particular forms of knowledge’ (Morgan & Smircich, 1980, p. 499). More recently, Cunliffe (2011) enriches Morgan and Smircich’s seminal framework, which drew attention to the importance of situating qualitative methods within broader philosophical debates, through her account of the increasing complexity of qualitative research choices. Cunliffe attributes this complexity to developments in metatheoretical perspectives, organization theory, research methods and approaches to theorization. In short, she argues that considering our metatheoretical positioning provides a basis for ‘building crafted, persuasive, consistent, and credible research accounts’ (Cunliffe, 2011, p. 647). It is with this in mind that I attempt to explore and delineate different schools of philosophical thought and their implications for the practice of group methods, as one mode of knowledge production.

Broadly speaking, scholars have highlighted that philosophical consensus does not prevail in qualitative research (Bryant & Lasky, 2007; Johnson et al., 2007), which is characterized by a proliferation of forms underpinned by diverse, and often competing, philosophical assumptions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Morgan & Smircich, 1980). The variety of understandings regarding the nature of qualitative research illustrates the possibility that different interpretations, which emphasize particular philosophical and procedural variations, underpin the use of what on the surface appears to be the same method or technique. It is hoped that this chapter can go some way towards developing the practice of group methods within the business and management domain through enhancing researchers' awareness of the relationship of philosophical issues to the design and application of the method itself. I argue that group methods can serve the interests of researchers from a variety of philosophical traditions, but understanding the practical implications of this variability is crucial to appropriate and effective use of group work from any given stance. In taking such an approach, I am working on the premise that engagement with research philosophy is a cornerstone of effective research practice rather than a distraction from the real task of 'doing' research.

The chapter is organized into three core sections. First, the antecedents of group methods are briefly outlined in order to contextualize their origins and uses. Second, the chapter delineates how researchers from diverse philosophical positions may variably conceive the method in order to develop a typology of group methods for business and management research. This section aims to expose the implications of diverse assumptions about ontology and epistemology for the practice of group methods in order that researchers may be better equipped to adhere to the tenets of quality criteria appropriate to their research tradition. Finally, the concluding section summarizes the key lines of argument advanced in the chapter.

ANTECEDENTS OF GROUP METHODS

Much of the business and management literature on group methods limits itself to acknowledging the benefits and drawbacks of the technique(s) (e.g. Byers & Wilcox, 1991; Kehoe & Lindgren, 2003; Rodrigues et al., 2010). Within their methodological accounts, few scholars – even indirectly – attend to the marked differences that reflect the distinctive intellectual priorities of the two fields from which group methods emerged: social psychology and psychotherapy (Morgan, 1997; Rook, 2003; Stewart et al., 2007).

In sum, group methods within the social psychological tradition emphasize within-group research that is evaluative in its purpose, direct in its questions and low in respondent interaction. In this way, it has arguably influenced what is often referred to as the 'group interview', which does not have the explicit interest in-group interaction commonly associated with 'focus groups'. Early uses of group methods within social psychology date back to World War II, where researchers sought to advance understanding of the persuasiveness of propaganda efforts and the effectiveness of training materials for troops (e.g. Merton & Kendall, 1946). Psychotherapeutic uses of group methods emerged from the priorities of clinical diagnosis and treatment, and Moreno's (1934) use of psychodrama and play therapy is considered seminal work within this domain. Here, researchers favour group methods that are more developmental in orientation and design, placing less emphasis on evaluative tasks: 'compared with groups conducted in the social psychological tradition, the clinical approach is more likely to emphasize interactive group discussions and activities; individuals' deep-seated thoughts and feelings, and extensive, wide-ranging and spontaneous expressions' (Stewart et al., 2007, p. 6).

The intellectual tension between the two disciplines from which group methods originate, and the epistemological assumptions of

their advocates, is often obscured by technique driven discussions and only becomes apparent in vague notions about what constitutes ‘scientific research’ or adequate knowledge (Stewart et al., 2007). Consequently, few researchers adopting group methods today are aware of these historically competitive ideologies and that the ‘resulting focus group hybrids reflect varying degrees of psychotherapeutic and social psychological influence’ (Rook, 2003, p. 40). One of my aims here is thus to address the potential methodological and epistemological confusion which may befall business and management scholars by outlining a typology of how researchers from different philosophical traditions might variably conceive group methods. Having outlined the social psychological and psychotherapeutic antecedents of group methods, the chapter now locates the method within commonly debated philosophies within the business and management domain, namely: neo-positivism, interpretivism and critical management studies.

TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY OF GROUP METHODS IN BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

The preceding section outlining the origins of group methods suggested the technique (or any given technique) is infused with philosophical commitments; methods are not neutral tools and are tied to different perspectives on how social phenomenon should be studied. In short, group methods can serve the requirements of many different philosophical positions along the subjective-objective continuum (Coule, 2013). This, however, raises significant questions about the design, conduct and analysis of group methods in meeting the demands of associated sets of diverse quality criteria. Indeed, there have been calls for social researchers to adapt and expand the dominant ‘market research’ models of group work to take into

account their own purposes and theoretical traditions (Hopkins, 2007; Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999). In this spirit, I now aim to delineate the implications of various philosophical schools of thought familiar to organization and management researchers for the design, conduct and analysis of group methods.

Group Methods and Neo-positivism

The domain of business and management research has and continues to be influenced by the intellectual and methodological priorities of positivism, resulting in a form of ‘qualitative positivism’ or neo-positivism (Duberley et al., 2012; Prasad & Prasad, 2002). Of particular note in the context of group methods, Calder (1977) considered the method from a philosophy of science perspective within the marketing discipline. Significantly, Calder’s basis for judging the three distinct approaches to group methods, which he terms ‘exploratory’, ‘clinical’ and ‘phenomenological’, is premised on ideal criteria for ‘scientific’ research.

The marketing, logistics and business communications literature is thus awash with concerns about the ability of group methods (and qualitative research more broadly) to form the basis of impartial, rigorous and reliable knowledge (see Calder, 1977; Byers & Wilcox, 1991; Kehoe & Lindgren, 2003 for conceptual discussion of the method and Rodrigues et al., 2010 for conceptual discussion with case examples of empirical group work). Wells (1974, p. 134) depicts this unease by questioning, ‘how can anything so bad be good?’ Yet the method continues to be used, perhaps largely due to its perceived instrumental usefulness to management practitioners (Kehoe & Lindgren, 2003; Rodrigues et al., 2010). Nevertheless, the aforementioned concerns about the subjectivity of group methods often result in them being relegated to a junior, preliminary role

within neo-positivist research endeavours. This manifests in various ways. For example, researchers tend to use group methods to generate or select theoretical ideas and hypotheses for subsequent deductive testing and for developing and piloting operational aspects of future quantitative research, such as the wording of questionnaire items (see Calder, 1977; Rodrigues et al., 2010; Zeller, 1987 for discussion of the nature and application of group methods from a neo-positivist standpoint). For the most part, neo-positivistic researchers see the value of group methods as acting as a precursor to scientific knowledge, subsequently generated by more rigorous and reliable quantitative techniques. Its use is often, therefore, limited to contexts where little is known about the phenomena of interest (Byers & Wilcox, 1991; Rodrigues et al., 2010).

In practising group methods, the methodological rigour and reflexivity emphasized within the neo-positivist stance has resulted in strict protocols and recommendations regarding executional details (Stewart et al., 2007) in order to minimize the chances of ‘technically problematic methodological lapses’ (Johnson et al., 2007, p. 24; also see Haynes, 2012). Here, the management researcher, as moderator of the group, is central to achieving objectivity and the production of quality data: ‘A focus group and its resulting information are only as good as a moderator [and] her or his knowledge of focus-group approaches and procedures’ (Kehoe & Lindgren, 2003, p. 21). Within a neo-positivist approach to group methods, the researcher adopts the position of detached observer during data collection with the goal of reducing threats to the objectivity and value of resulting data (Calder, 1977; Kehoe & Lindgren, 2003; Rose-Anderssen et al., 2010). The priority is control over the output of the group and much has been written about the role of group size (usually 8–10), composition (normally strangers to avoid pollution of data) and level of interaction among participants (low due to structured

topic guide) in contributing to the controllability of group work (Morgan, 1998; Rodrigues et al., 2010). Stage-driven models that outline the steps of group work and the role of the researcher within each step abound the neo-positivist informed management literature that takes group methods as its focus (e.g. Kehoe & Lindgren, 2003; Rodrigues et al., 2010).

Positioning group participants as passive subjects, who hold (objective/factual) opinions and preferences, best expressed under the ‘control’ of the moderator, holds significant analytical implications. For example, a preoccupation with objectivity and neutrality has led some researchers to advocate assigning numerical values to data generated through group methods, which they propose can be manipulated to achieve greater insights into its ‘meaning’ and provide confidence of theoretical saturation (Byers & Wilcox, 1991; Rodrigues et al., 2010; Schmidt, 2010). Such assertions appear to embody the belief that the heart of the quantitative–qualitative debate is philosophical and not methodological (see Trochim, 2000). In other words, researchers may acknowledge some fundamental differences, but assume they lie primarily at the level of (epistemological and ontological) assumptions about research rather than at the level of data.

Table 8.1 provides an illustrative example of how a researcher with neo-positivist commitments may chose to code and analyse group data. The data is drawn from 19 participants across 5 focus groups conducted as part of my doctoral research and concerned with organizational sustainability in the non-profit sector. The opening question within the group sessions encouraged participants to conceptualize organizational sustainability. On reading through this section of the transcripts, a number of themes emerge. For the purpose of this example, seven descriptive categories have been identified and given a short label that represents the theme in the participants’ response (1=human resources; 2=governance; 3=funding; 4=organizational development/

Table 8.1 Data table showing simple quantification of textual data

<i>Group member</i>	<i>Theme 1</i>	<i>Theme 2</i>	<i>Theme 3</i>	<i>Theme 4</i>	<i>Theme 5</i>	<i>Theme 6</i>	<i>Theme 7</i>	<i>Totals</i>
1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
5	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	3
6	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
7	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	4
8	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	3
9	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	3
10	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	3
13	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
14	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
15	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	4
18	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
19	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Totals	7	3	14	3	2	6	6	

Data source: Coule (2008)

planning; 5=collaboration; 6=strategic relevance; 7=demand for services). The appearance of a '1' under any given theme indicates that the participant mentioned the theme; a '0' indicates that the participant did not mention that particular theme.

Table 8.1 allows the researcher to easily describe certain characteristics of their data, like that theme 3 (funding) was the most frequently mentioned in the consideration of organizational sustainability or that the majority of respondents touched on between 2 and 3 of the themes (the most common number of themes to be mentioned by respondents is 2). This kind of 'quantitative' content analysis can then be pushed further by examining the correlation between the themes based on which respondents addressed them (see Table 8.2):

As depicted in Table 8.2, this kind of analysis shows that themes 1 and 3 are

significantly positively correlated; people who touched on theme 1 (human resource) also tended to mention theme 3 (funding). Themes 5 (collaboration) and 6 (strategic relevance) are also significantly positively correlated. Such an approach to qualitative data is, however, contentious and business and management researchers committed to alternative knowledge constituting assumptions would likely challenge the meaningfulness of 'opinions' or 'attitudes' that have been isolated from the context in which they were generated. The loss of content interaction between group members – and indeed between group members and researchers – is particularly contentious as the defining characteristic of much group work is 'the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group' (Morgan, 1988, p. 12).

Table 8.2 Spearman rho correlation matrix

	<i>Theme 1</i>	<i>Theme 2</i>	<i>Theme 3</i>	<i>Theme 4</i>	<i>Theme 5</i>	<i>Theme 6</i>
Theme 2	-.331					
Theme 3	.456*	-.069				
Theme 4	-.031	-.188	.259			
Theme 5	.094	-.149	.205	-.149		
Theme 6	-.284	-.294	-.108	.016	.505*	
Theme 7	-.284	.327	-.108	.016	-.233	.026

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level.

Data source: Coule (2008)

Group Methods and Interpretivism

The discussion of interpretive research is not simple as the label subsumes a variety of genres, but perhaps the unifying feature is the attempt by researchers in this tradition to access and understand participants' intersubjective, culturally derived meanings to explain behaviour in everyday business and management contexts through *Verstehen* (Johnson et al., 2007). In attempting to understand processes of symbolic 'world-making' (Schwandt, 1994), rather than a ready-made world which is awaiting discovery, interpretive research sets itself apart from the neo-positivist tradition. From this standpoint, questions about the reliability and generalizability of group methods that are pervasive among neo-positivist researchers who use the method become less meaningful as the values and preconceptions researchers bring to interpretative acts are acknowledged through reflexive practices. In other words, the researcher's representation of actors' reality is seen to actively contribute to its creation (Haynes, 2012).

A phenomenological approach to group methods is not uncommon within the business and management literature (see Calder (1977) and Kehoe & Lindgren (2003) for conceptual discussion of group methods from this perspective). More specifically, it is perhaps most prevalent within the marketing discipline due to its ability to provide 'A chance to "experience" a "flesh and blood"

consumer. It is the opportunity for the client to put himself in the position of the consumer and to be able to look at his product ... from her vantage point' (Axelrod, 1975, p. 6). Such an approach is positioned as being both instrumentally useful and predicated on the active involvement of the researcher through 'interactive personal contact' (Calder, 1977, p. 359). Notably, however, several scholars who advocate the use of phenomenological approaches to group methods remain driven by positivistic quality criteria for evaluating research and thus have concerns about the lack of prescriptive procedural protocols and extent to which facilitative behaviour is left to the idiosyncrasies of individual researchers. Subsequently, phenomenological group work is argued to produce everyday (non-scientific) knowledge by such scholars (Calder, 1977; Kehoe & Lindgren, 2003), despite the well established idea that interpretive approaches should be judged by criteria that are significantly different from those used to evaluate the rigour of neo-positivist research (Prasad & Prasad, 2002; also see Johnson et al., 2006 for a comprehensive delineation of evaluation criteria for research informed by different philosophical traditions).

Notwithstanding the above tensions and contradictions, we can take from the discussion of phenomenological approaches to group work that the underpinning assumption within this tradition is that the foundation for explaining human action is understanding how people actively establish and re-establish the meanings

they use to organize experiences (Johnson et al., 2007). The resulting implications for group work – when compared to neo-positivist approaches – are less (researcher imposed) structure; less researcher control in facilitating the group and greater interaction between group members; smaller group sizes (usually 5–8 people); openness to groups of strangers, pre-existing groups or both (Bill & Olaison, 2009; Calder, 1977; Kehoe & Lindgren, 2003).

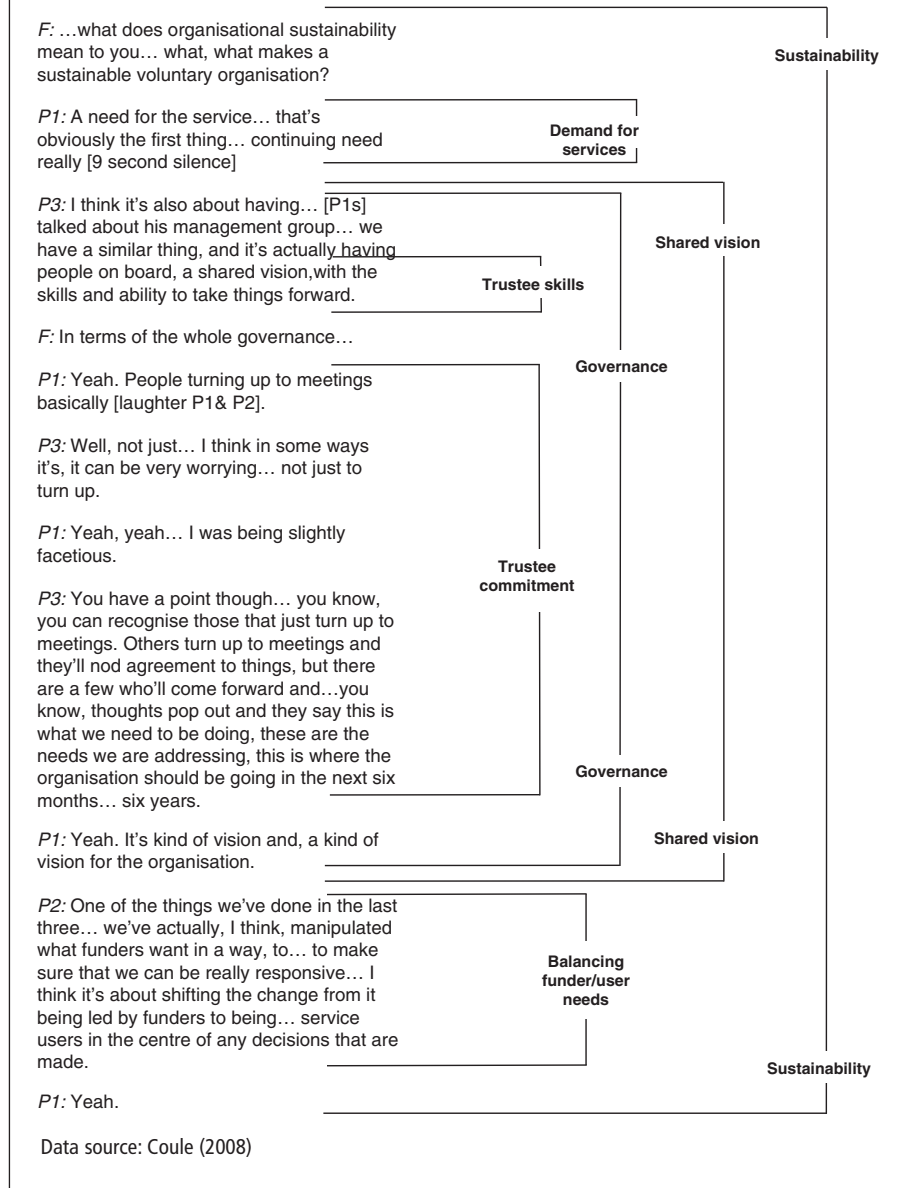
Analytical approaches are likely to involve some form of interpretive content analysis based on the premise that it ‘retains something of the richness of transcript data, while ensuring that the great mass of data thus generated are analysed systematically and not selectively’ (Frankland & Bloor, 1999, p. 145). This technique is based on qualitative data indexing (see Dey, 1993; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996), the purpose of which is to facilitate comparative analysis by gathering all data on a particular topic under one heading, in order to make the study of material manageable for analysis purposes. It is important to note that indexing is distinct from the activity of exclusive coding of material (as in the previous example) in that there is no necessity, at the indexing stage, to settle on a final interpretation of an item of text; rather, each piece of transcript is assigned several, non-exclusive index-codes referring to the several analytic topics on which it may bear. The objective of indexing should be to simply pose a number of possible interpretations, deliberately delaying a final interpretation until the text item can be compared systematically with the entire spectrum of text items carrying the same index code(s). The emphasis in the indexing process is on inclusiveness (including initially all possibly relevant material), rather than on exclusiveness. The indexing process is cyclical. New index-codes may emerge in later transcripts and the researcher then returns to earlier texts to add the new index code to them. Thus, indexing is essentially inductive in nature, with categories emerging from the analyst’s absorption in the text:

Recalling the events of the focus group itself, the analyst has a participant’s ‘pre-understanding’ of the transcript and understanding is deepened by submersion in the text. Analytic categories are generated through this understanding and these categories, applied to the text, deepen analytic understanding, which in turn stimulates greater elaboration of the analytic categories, which are in turn applied to the text, and so on. The process is not reductive: the data are retained in richness and context, but comparative analysis is facilitated. (Frankland & Bloor, 1999, p. 147)

The brief example of data in the extract below (Box 8.1) illustrates how the method could be applied (F is the female facilitator; P1 and P3 are male Chief Executive Officers of non-profit organizations; P2 is a female Chief Executive Officer). Again the example is drawn from a section of the transcript relating to the opening question, which encouraged participants to reflect on how they make sense of organizational sustainability.

Other interpretivist researchers would advocate devoting more attention to group transcripts as ‘talk’ and focusing on the complexity of interaction (Beach, 1990; Kitzinger, 1994; Myers, 1998). There are a number of approaches to conversation, which may differ in some respects, but all tend to share assumptions that identities are negotiated in discourse (and thus focus on how group members set up and work out roles); talk is organized moment to moment by participants (and therefore look at how they define sections, rather than defining sections as analysts); talk is sequenced, one thing after another (each ‘utterance’ is considered in terms of what came before and after) (Meyers & Macnaghten, 1999). Here, consideration will be given to a short example showing how participants redefine topics. It may seem that the researcher’s topic guide sets topics for discussion within-group work. A closer examination of transcripts, however, can demonstrate how participants shift and evolve a particular topic, sometimes in unpredictable ways, so there are often several potential topics at play. Consider the passage below (Box 8.2) from a focus group with the Chairs

Box 8.1 Illustration of data indexing



of three voluntary organizations (P1 and P3 are male; P2 is female; *** indicates that a name/place has been made anonymous).

Note that, at the beginning of each turn, participants acknowledge the topic (human resource sustainability), but, by the end of

their turn, they have often introduced one or more new topics that are to be taken as related. For instance, participant 1 (P1) introduces the topic of human resource (HR) sustainability as being important in the consideration of organizational sustainability, and goes on

Box 8.2 Approaching group work as 'talk'

- P1: Sustainability means personnel sustainability ... that's the key for me, is ... having been through it with the *** project, the health one. We had a fabulous project worker, and because we were on this sort of, bidding for the passing ship of money, the insecurity and the lateness of paperwork coming to us, and the insecurity that she had ... she left us. For her benefit it was actually very good because she ended up with a very interesting career as a result, but, it was our loss and we've got the same issue at the moment. We've taken over this theatre, it's now in the *** Partnership and all these issues about keeping the ... are we going to keep it going ... it's over used by people now, it's got a financial future, but we need priming to get it going and all community issues to do with the charitable aims are there, and yet the priming of the whole thing is held back. So the sustainability is basically keeping people who need a job, want a job, that are useful to our community and our project, and fulfil everything. We don't have that sustainability personally, and I don't see how people, good people like that can you know ... give a commitment, and that's what we need. I don't know what you feel?
- P2: I suppose, that I would support what you've said, but because most of the people I employ are on annual contracts, because that is how social services contract ... until this year, this time we've got a two year for the first time ... I'm used to a turnover of staff because I can never give any more security than that one year. Except within young people, where at one time we would have three years, but that then means as you come to the end of that three years you have nothing, because nobody is going to pick up your funding until you are dead in the water [sigh P1]. So you ... we have actually funded, from within house, for three months to try and cover that period. But even so, we're having to provide hope ... and we have staff that we have grown, trained ... for three years. I've lost one, I've got two left ... I've an idea I'll lose one of those ... come hell or high water I'll keep the last one. But it is ... we've learnt ... [P3s] been there, I've been there, I've seen ... all you can say is you've launched so many good staff out into the sector, that at least we've done something right [laughter P2].
- P1: Yes. Yes.
- P3: Staffing is critical. This short-term question ... I certainly whole heartedly agree with what [P2] says. It's a major problem ... that you get people trained up, keen, working well and all of a sudden ... bang, the funding comes to an end for a particular project and you've lost an absolutely marvellous person. So, in that sense, it's the sust ... sustainability is ... has a big knock in those circumstances. Sustainability is wrapped up also within the ... the problem of doing short, medium-term projects themselves. Because, it takes that length of time to get a good project up and running ... to really get it motivating, and unless you can then get the funding to carry it on after that, then the whole thing shuts down and it's gone. And that's where I would slip in here central government, because central government ... and you can understand why they do it ... but they come up with these wonderful quick fixes to try to solve potential, well existing problems not potential problems, because they're reactive rather than proactive. And ... they will set a whole new range of guidelines and rules for those of us who are desperately trying to make the communities succeed, and then change dramatically and all of a sudden all the work you've done ... because it's moving society in this direction then the other direction ... is lost, and ... which is where I would ... one is, sustainability is also so dependent on the partners that you're working with. And particularly here in the voluntary sector, there are two aspects here I think which all of us have to live with and accept and understand ... and number one is, some ... a voluntary sector organization is usually only as good as the people that are running it at a particular moment in time...
- P2: Mm.
- P3: ...and some organizations will succeed because they've got good people running them, and marching the thing forward. On the other hand, you have others who, for whatever reason, they have a weak person at the top and the thing dies. Because some of them are so small that you are talking about one, two or three people to hold the thing together, and if you haven't got the right people in there, you ... we may lose a partner, a potentially good partner. We are all, whether we like it or not, we are all very dependant upon the partnerships we variously have with the public sectors, and that is getting more and more ... we don't have to like it, but it's, it's there and therefore one has to learn to work with the public sector partners. Because, certainly as far as my organization's concerned, without the public sector, we would not survive ... that's where the bulk of the money comes from ... and one has to learn to work with them in almost a political, with a small 'p', environment to be able to succeed.

Data source: Coule (2008)

to talk about the nature of short-term funding; by stressing the impact that short-term funding has on HR sustainability he presents the second topic (funding) as relevant. Participant 2 follows by acknowledging the impact that the current funding environment has on the HR system, but implies that high turnover of staff is accepted as a 'given', due to her organization's funding arrangements. She does, however, go on to relate the short-term nature of posts – largely due to the short-term nature of funding – to a decline in staff morale, and a situation whereby the organization is having to provide 'hope' to staff through a process of funding posts from the organization's 'reserves'. Again, P3 acknowledges the topic of HR sustainability and the negative impact of short-term funding on this valuable resource. He then goes on to link short-term funding to central government policy initiatives, and introduces the wider external environment in which non-profit organizations operate as an important determinant of their very survival, adding yet more relevant new topics to the debate. Thus, the topic can shift as the discussion develops, while at each stage it remains relevant. Such a set of transitions is typical of many long passages in the transcript in which the moderator does not intervene; each participant marks their contribution at the beginning as relevant to the current topic, but within each turn, the participants can shift the context and interpretation for that topic.

Group Methods and Critical Research

Theoretical resources from Marxism, Labor Process Theory, Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, Pragmatism and Symbolic Interactionism can all be said to inform the 'broad church' of critical management research. Moreover, the principles of critical management underpin a number of intellectual movements such as feminism and environmentalism. The unifying feature of critical

endeavours within business and management research is perhaps the challenge they pose to instrumentalism, structures of domination, asymmetrical power relations and what is naturally taken for granted (Adler et al., 2007). A defining characteristic of critical approaches then, is their attention to promoting emancipation (Duberley et al., 2012; Stahl, 2008) – a foundation that sets them apart from the neo-positivist and interpretivist traditions previously discussed.

The potential of critical group methods has been recognized by social researchers generally (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999; Webb & Kevern, 2008) and management researchers specifically (see Bill & Olaison, 2009; Stahl et al., 2011 for empirical examples). From this vantage point, the importance of power in social interaction becomes of central importance. In a practical sense, this manifests in researcher's sensitivity to power issues in everyday procedural choices, such as topics. By way of example, Bill and Olaison (2009) propose what they term an indirect approach to group work through utilizing role-play. These authors do not claim that such an approach to producing knowledge removes the power imbalance between researchers and research participants, but emphasize the potential it provides for co-creation between researchers and participants:

A role-play has a script with rules and constraints, but it also leaves room for the group's decision-making abilities, analytical acumen, and, most importantly, the experience, emotions and imagination of its members. Our scripts also had rules ... and the participants started their roleplaying in a specific setting that they could not initially control or co-create ... To solve the task, or 'to play the game', the participants first had to accept the setting and script, and then they had to co-create it and give their own characters life. (p. 9)

What such scholars are attempting to do, is mitigate to some degree the inherent danger that group work 'chases its own tail' by 'offering up its own agendas and categories and getting those same agendas and categories back in a refined or filtered or inverted

Box 8.3 Extract:

P3: Staffing is critical. This short-term question ... I certainly whole heartedly agree with what [P2] says. It's a major problem ... that you get people trained up, keen, working well and all of a sudden ... bang, the funding comes to an end for a particular project and you've lost an absolutely marvellous person. So, in that sense ... sustainability ... has a big knock in those circumstances. Sustainability is wrapped up also within the ... problem of doing short, medium-term projects themselves. Because, it takes that length of time to get a good project up and running ... to really get it motivating, and unless you can then get the funding to carry it on after that, then the whole thing shuts down and it's gone. And that's where I would slip in here central government, because central government ... and you can understand why they do it ... but they come up with these wonderful quick fixes to try to solve ... existing problems ... because they're reactive rather than proactive. And ... they will set a whole new range of guidelines and rules for those of us who are desperately trying to make the communities succeed, and then change dramatically and all of a sudden all the work you've done ... because it's moving society in this direction then the other direction ... is lost...

Data source: Coule (2008)

form' (Potter & Hepburn, 2005, p. 293). Stahl et al. (2011) conclude that group methods, when designed and executed from a critical perspective – can contribute to both researcher and participant emancipation. In respect of participants, the authors advocate attempts to enhance empowerment and the voices of the less powerful through application of rules to promote an 'ideal speech' situation, the strategic placement of participants within the room (based on a pre-group assessment of how timid or dominant participants were likely to be) and involving them in analytical processes. For business and management researchers, the potential for emancipation lies in the role of participant discourses in challenging researcher's assumptions about their topics of investigation. Put differently, group members can (often inadvertently) call into question taken for granted assumptions underpinning particular disciplinary knowledge systems. The nature of group work within this tradition thus calls for critical examination of how researchers make sense of their own field-work experiences. Reflexive processes are designed to pay attention to how group accounts are 'influenced by their authors' social positions and by the associated use of power-invested language and convention in constructing and conveying the objects of

their research' (Adler et al., 2007, p. 11; also see Haynes, 2012).

'Critical' group work often involves small numbers of participants (5–8) from pre-existing groups, as these are the networks in which people might normally discuss (or evade) issues, form ideas and make decisions. In analytical terms, power relations and their corresponding reality constructions are the required foci. In other words, management researchers question both other's truth claims and how they themselves construct meaning and make truth claims (Haynes, 2012). Reflexivity becomes a moral or ethical project that gives consideration to how group context and broader cultural/institutional features encourage or suppress certain points of view rather than a tool for effective research in the neopositivist sense of the term. At a practical level, researchers who take seriously the contextual, situated nature of accounts and how they become legitimized are much more likely to advocate analytical strategies such as conversation analysis (Antaki, 1994; Greatbatch & Clark, 2012), narrative analysis (Maitlis, 2012) and discourse analysis (Dick, 2013). By way of example, let's revisit one section of text from one participant in the previous example with a specific focus on how they orient to and

actively construct an account of organizational sustainability and the different positions adopted in conversations.

Here (Box 8.3), critical scholars would be interested in the way P3 positions his contribution by establishing mutual ground between his account of sustainability issues and the account constructed previously by P2 in lines 1 and 2 through an enthusiastic 'receipt token' (Dick, 2013). Here P3 provides explicit approval of P2's account and warrants her version of reality by endorsing the idea that the source of trouble lies with short-term funding and its impact on staffing continuity. P3 then prefaces the reduced efficacy of his organization's work (lines 15/16) by suggesting that it is not an internal problem within his organization but a consequence of the central state's transient approach to social problems (lines 10–12). Just this very brief illustration is useful in showing how critical group work may be used to examine the ways in which narrative accounts are constructed in order to establish the 'facts' of organizational life on a particular issue within a particular context.

CONCLUSION

I have attempted to highlight in this chapter that group methods – or indeed any data collection method – cannot be viewed as an 'interpretive' or 'critical' method *per se*. The mere adoption of a method does not say much about the philosophical tradition underpinning its use. Decisions regarding group design, conduct and analysis are informed by researcher's knowledge constituting assumptions, which heightens the importance of critical engagement with both the theoretical and practical issues around group work. Neopositivistic approaches for example, which encourage researchers to present themselves as removed, objective nonentities whose role it is to document the 'subject's' point of view, are not commensurate with interpretive

understanding (Cunningham-Burley et al., 1999). As we have seen, however, they remain commonplace within business and management studies. Nevertheless, we have also seen that researchers committed to alternative perspectives are exploring different approaches to conducting, understanding and theorizing group work (Bill & Olaison, 2009; Rose-Anderssen et al., 2010; Stahl et al., 2011; Steyaert & Bouwen, 2004).

In Table 8.3 the typology of group methods presented thus offers an alternative conception of group methods, by seeing them as existing in a field of tensions between different logics (Coule, 2013). This encourages the acknowledgement of ambiguity in the aims, processes and outcomes favoured in particular approaches to group work and goes some way towards bridging the gap between philosophical assumptions and method to encourage considered fieldwork practices. I would encourage researchers adopting group methods to articulate and reflect upon their particular philosophical commitments and subsequent methodological consequences. Questions about the design, conduct and analyses of group work are not simply technical or practical questions, but are rooted in particular theoretical traditions that significantly influence research aims. While group methods are becoming increasingly established, how they are adopted and adapted to serve diverse and often competing philosophical perspectives is of significant importance. In this chapter, I have suggested a typology of group work within diverse philosophical traditions in order to encouraging more informed choices about how researchers relate to group methods. The idea, however, is to encourage productive lines of thinking rather than provide an exact map of the terrain. It is my intention that the ideas suggested should not be seen as another complication or additional burden to researchers, but a way of avoiding becoming trapped in certain ways of thinking about group work and knowledge production.

Table 8.3 Typology of group methods in organization and management research

<i>Philosophical tradition</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Design characteristics</i>	<i>Analytical characteristics</i>
Neo-positivist	Document subjects opinions and attitudes, which are treated as 'facts' Often a precursor to quantitative study	<i>Role of researcher:</i> Detached <i>Control:</i> Researcher <i>Discursive flexibility:</i> Low due to structured topic guide <i>Group size:</i> Often 8–10 <i>Group composition:</i> Often strangers to avoid pollution of data <i>Reflexivity:</i> Limited to the deployment and monitoring of particular research protocols to ensure methodological rigour, objectivity and data quality	Removal of data from context in which it was generated through the use of quantitative content analysis and/or inductive generation of grounded theory Often aimed at selecting theoretical ideas or developing hypotheses for deductive testing
Interpretive	Access and understand intersubjective, culturally derived meanings in order to explain behaviour in everyday social contexts	<i>Role of researcher:</i> Engaged <i>Control:</i> Researcher/participants <i>Discursive flexibility:</i> Medium/high through semi-structured/unstructured topic guides <i>Group size:</i> Often 5–8 <i>Group composition:</i> Strangers/pre-existing groups or both <i>Reflexivity:</i> Used to enhance understanding by acknowledging the values and preconceptions researchers bring to interpretative acts; researcher's representation of actors' reality actively contributes to creating it	Aim to shed light on substantive issues whilst retaining richness and complexity of data Emphasis on systematic not selective analysis of data, often using some form of interpretive content analysis or conversation analysis that constitutes group transcripts as 'talk'
Critical	Understand group norms and the conformity, consensus, censorship and dispute surrounding such norms	<i>Role of researcher:</i> Engaged co-producer of group discourse <i>Control:</i> Researcher/participants <i>Discursive flexibility:</i> High due to pursuit of discursive democracy <i>Group size:</i> Often 5–8 <i>Group composition:</i> Often pre-existing groups as these are the networks in which people might normally discuss (or evade) issues, form ideas and make decisions <i>Reflexivity:</i> Moral/ethical project that considers how group context and broader cultural/institutional features encourage or suppress viewpoints. Awareness of the (power) location of researcher in relation to group members and topic of investigation	Examination of competing and contested discourses to surface how and why certain accounts dominate and others are suppressed or silenced Common analytical methods include those which enable researchers to take seriously the contextual, situated nature of accounts and how they become legitimized such as conversation analysis, narrative analysis and discourse analysis

REFERENCES

- Adler, P.S., Forbes, L.C. and Willmott, H. (2007) 'Chapter 3: Critical management studies', *The Academy of Management Annals*, 1(1): 119–79.
- Antaki, C. (1994) *Explaining and Arguing: The Social Organisation of Account*. London: Sage.
- Axelrod, M.D. (1975) 'Marketers get an eyeful when focus groups expose products, ideas, images, and copy, etc. to consumers', *Marketing News* (28 February): 6–7.
- Beach, W.A. (1990) 'Language as and in technology: Facilitating topic organisation in a videotex focus group meeting', in M.J. Medhurst, A. Gonzalez and T.R. Peterson (eds.), *Communication and the Culture of Technology*. Pullman, WA: Washington State University Press, pp. 197–219.
- Bill, F. and Olaison, L. (2009) 'The indirect approach of semi-focused groups: Expanding focus group research through role-playing', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 4(1): 7–26.
- Bryant, J. and Lasky, B. (2007) 'A researcher's tale: Dealing with epistemological divergence', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 2(3): 179–93.
- Byers P.Y. and Wilcox, J.R. (1991) 'Focus groups: A qualitative opportunity for researchers', *The Journal of Business Communication*, 28(1): 63–78.
- Calder, B.J. (1977) 'Focus groups and the nature of qualitative marketing research', *Journal of Marketing Research*, 14(3): 353–64.
- Coffey, A. and Atkinson, P. (1996) *Making Sense of Qualitative Data: Complementary Research Strategies*. London: Sage.
- Coule, T.M. (2008) 'Sustainability in voluntary organisations: Exploring the dynamics of organisational strategy'. PhD Thesis, Sheffield Hallam University, UK.
- Coule, T.M. (2013) 'Theories of knowledge and focus groups in organization and management research', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 8(2):148–62.
- Cunliffe, A.L. (2011) 'Crafting qualitative research: Morgan and Smircich 30 years on', *Organizational Research Methods*, 14(4): 647–73.
- Cunningham-Burley, S., Kerr, A. and Pavis, S. (1999) 'Theorizing subjects and subject matter in focus group research', in R.S. Barbour and J. Kitzinger (eds.), *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp.186–99.
- Dey, I. (1993) *Qualitative Data Analysis: A User-Friendly Guide for Social Scientists*. London: Routledge.
- Dick, P. (2013) 'The politics of experience: A discursive psychology approach to understanding different accounts of sexism in the workplace', *Human Relations*, 66(5): 645–69.
- Duberley, J., Johnson, P. and Cassell, C. (2012) 'Philosophies underpinning qualitative research', in G. Symon and C. Cassell (eds.), *Qualitative Organizational Research*. London: Sage, pp.15–34.
- Fern, E.F. (1982) 'The use of focus groups for idea generation: The effects of group size, acquaintanceship and moderator on response quantity and quality', *Journal of Marketing Research*, 19(1): 1–13.
- Frankland, J. and Bloor, M. (1999) 'Some issues arising in the systematic analysis of focus group materials', in R.S. Barbour and J. Kitzinger (eds.), *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory & Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Greatbatch, D. and Clark, T. (2012) 'Conversation analysis in management research', in G. Symon and C. Cassell (eds.), *Qualitative Organizational Research*. London: Sage, pp. 451–72.
- Guba, E. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1994) 'Competing paradigms in qualitative research', in N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Haynes, K. (2012) 'Reflexivity in qualitative research', in G. Symon and C. Cassell (eds.), *Qualitative Organizational Research*. London: Sage, pp. 72–89.
- Hopkins, P.E. (2007) 'Thinking critically and creatively about focus groups', *Area*, 39(4): 528–35.
- Johnson, P., Buehring, A., Cassell, C. and Symon, G. (2006) 'Evaluating qualitative management research: Towards a contingent criteriology', *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 8(3): 131–56.

- Johnson, P., Buehring, A., Cassell, C. and Symon, G. (2007) 'Defining qualitative research: An empirical investigation', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 2(1): 23–42.
- Kehoe, W. and Lindgren, J. (2003) 'Focus groups in global marketing: Concept, methodology and implications', *The Marketing Management Journal*, 13(2): 14–28.
- Kitzinger, J. (1994) 'The methodology of focus groups: The importance of interaction between research participants', *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 16(1): 103–21.
- Kitzinger, J. and Barbour, R. S. (1999) 'Introduction: The challenge and promise of focus groups', in R.S. Barbour and J. Kitzinger (eds.), *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp.1–20.
- Maitlis, S. (2012) 'Narrative analysis', in G. Symon and C. Cassell (eds.), *Qualitative Organizational Research*. London: Sage, pp. 492–511.
- Merton, R.K. and Kendall, P.L. (1946) 'The focused interview', *American Journal of Sociology*, 51(6): 541–57.
- Meyers, G. and Macnaghten, P. (1999) 'Can focus groups be analysed as talk?', in R.S. Barbour and J. Kitzinger (eds.), *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp.173–85.
- Moreno, J.L. (1934) *Who Shall Survive? A New Approach to the Problems of Human Interrelations*. Washington, DC: Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Co. Cited in D.W. Stewart, P.N. Shamdasani and D.W. Rook (2007) *Focus Groups: Theory and Practice* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Morgan, D. L. (1988) *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
- Morgan, D.L. (1997) *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Morgan, D.L. (1998) *Planning Focus Groups*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Morgan, G. and Smircich, L. (1980) 'The case for qualitative research', *Academy of Management Review*, 5(4): 491–500.
- Myers, G. (1998). 'Displaying opinions: Disagreement and topic shifts in focus groups', *Language in Sociology*, 27(1): 85–111.
- Potter, J. and Hepburn, A. (2005) 'Qualitative interviews in psychology: Problems and possibilities', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2(4): 281–307.
- Prasad, A. and Prasad, P. (2002) 'The coming of age of interpretive organizational research', *Organizational Research Methods*, 5(1): 4–11.
- Rodrigues, V.S., Piecyk, M., Potter, A., McKinnon, A., Naim, M. and Edwards, J. (2010) 'Assessing the application of focus groups as a method for collecting data in logistics', *International Journal of Logistics: Research and Applications*, 13(1): 75–94.
- Rook, D.W. (2003) 'Focus groups fail to connect theory and current practice', *Marketing News*, 37(19): 40–6.
- Rose-Anderssen, C., Baldwin, J.S. and Ridgway, K. (2010) 'The effects of communicative interactions on meaning construction in group situations', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 5(2): 196–215.
- Schmidt, M. (2010) 'Quantification of transcripts from depth interviews, open-ended responses and focus groups: Challenges, accomplishments, new applications and perspectives for market research', *International Journal of Market Research*, 52(4): 483–509.
- Schwandt, T.A. (1994) 'Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human enquiry', in N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
- Stahl, B.C. (2008) 'The ethical nature of critical research in information systems', *Information Systems Journal*, 18(2): 137–63.
- Stahl, B.C., Tremblay, M.C. and LeRouge, C.M. (2011) 'Focus groups and critical social IS research: How choice of method can promote emancipation of respondents and researchers', *European Journal of Information Systems*, 20(4): 378–94.
- Stewart, D.W., Shamdasani, P.N. and Rook, D.W. (2007) *Focus Groups: Theory and practice* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Steyaert, C. and Bouwen, R. (2004) 'Group methods of organizational analysis', in C. Cassell and G. Symon (eds.), *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*. London: Sage, pp.140–53.

- Trochim, W.M.K (2000) *The Research Knowledge Base* (2nd ed). Cincinnati, OH: Atomic Dog Publishing.
- Webb, C. and Kevern, J. (2008) 'Focus groups as a research method: A critique of some aspects of their use in nursing research', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 33(6): 798–805.
- Wells, W.D. (1974) 'Group interviewing', in R. Ferber (ed.), *Handbook of Marketing Research*. New York: McGraw-Hill, pp.133–46.
- Zeller, R.A. (1987) Focus groups. Unpublished Manuscript, Bowling Green State University, Ohio.

Sociomateriality and Qualitative Research: Method, Matter and Meaning

Olivia Davies and Kathleen Riach

INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to explore how we consider the sociomateriality of organisational life, emphasising the practical methodological considerations, opportunities and tensions that researchers may face when committing to a sociomaterial approach. As Orlikowski (2006) suggests, organisations are full of ‘stuff’: bodies, furniture, food, technology, waste, natural and synthetic materials, and bacteria and microorganisms that all combine and coalesce to make up the environments and contexts we come to understand as work. However, in many ways the discursive turn of the 1980s marginalised the importance of matter in its own right within Management and Organisation Studies (MOS) through forefronting the symbolic, discursive and ideational aspects that constitute Organisation. This is not to say that the philosophers and social theorists that inspire organisational researchers deny the power of matter, but rather its analytical

force is often relegated to one of ideological significance in how it came to be used within our discipline. This reflects other disciplinary trends, leading Barad to lament that ‘Language matters. Discourse matters. Culture matters. But there is an important sense in which the only thing that does not seem to matter anymore is matter’ (Barad, 2003, p. 801).

Despite this, matter has always haunted the periphery of our horizons in business and management research, particularly when undertaking fieldwork. As Dale and Burrell (2008, p. 205) suggest, ‘although ethnographic descriptions continue to include the material world as the context of organisational life, these then tend to be analysed through the lens of conceptual tools that focus on a predominantly ideational level: discourse, culture and identity’. At the same time, even when the focus of study is text and textuality, researchers are anecdotally aware of the importance of physical mutable objects both to themselves and to those they

engage with during research, from buildings and office layout, to physical aspects of the workplace such as memos, documents and the bodies of organisational members.

In this chapter, we suggest that sociomaterial is an umbrella term that provides a number of possibilities for qualitative researchers who are interested in the melee of matter and meaning that create organisations and organising processes. In particular, it can provide a way of considering the complexity and interdependencies that come to constitute organisational life. As we will discuss, sociomateriality provides us with a range of methodological and analytical imperatives that allow us to explore how practices, subjectivities or modes of organisational knowing emerge through various enactments that take into account matter and meaning as inseparable forces.

To explore the current state of the field in sociomaterial research agendas, we begin by briefly outlining the theoretical underpinnings of sociomateriality, with specific reference to their adoption in qualitative organisational research to date. Specifically, we outline the particular ontological position that sociomateriality ascribes to, identifying three tenets of sociomaterial theory that have consequences for the choices qualitative researchers make: relationality, action and in-situ process. Through reflecting on current studies as well as our own research, we then introduce some of the ways to translate sociomateriality into data collection and fieldwork practices. Finally, we consider how to carry through the theoretical commitments that underlie sociomateriality into processes of data analysis. Throughout the chapter, we seek to draw on exemplars of empirical and analytical work published under a sociomaterial umbrella, although note that the tools employed are often implicit. Subsequently, one of the main aims of this chapter is to open up a discussion of the processes and techniques that make research practice distinctly sociomaterial.

KEY TENETS OF A SOCIOMATERIAL APPROACH IN QUALITATIVE ORGANISATIONAL RESEARCH

Sociomateriality – also referred to as sociomateriality (with a hyphen) – covers a broad theoretical church under which various positions compete and clash in terms of their ontology, epistemology and politics. However, they generally seek to explore how sociocultural aspects of life intertwine with materiality. Inasmuch, sociomaterial methods are predominantly concerned with tracing human and non-human connections, emphasising the relationality and dependency patterns that come to constitute a given phenomenon.

One of the distinctive characteristics of sociomaterial research (as opposed to other approaches that are interested in the physical or material aspects of organisational life) is a commitment to intra-action. Intra-action denies the possibility of any entity/relatum – human, non-human, living, inert – pre-existing their interrelating with other entities. Inasmuch, for the sociomaterial researcher, the emergence and continued existence of all worldly entities/relata and the phenomena they constitute always arises out of, and is contingent on, iterative reconfigurations of relata (Barad, 2007). Consequently, since sociomateriality does not recognise tangible relata and intangible concepts as separable, meaning, agency and subjectivity are never considered as inherent or permanent qualities of an entity. Rather life is considered as the transitory outcome of our entanglement with other entities.

The theoretical sources of inspiration sociomaterial researchers draw on are notable in their diversity and include: Latour and Callon's Actor Network Theory (Latour, 2005); quantum theory and agential realism in the work of Barad (2007); Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage theory (1980); Bourdieu and practice theory (1977); Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological treatise (1945); and Spinoza's theory of affect (1994). However, most influential

in business and management sociomaterial empirical research to date has been two broad trajectories that can be understood as either emphasising the stabilisation of sociomaterial networks, or focusing on the ongoing and contingent dynamics of sociomaterial enactment.

The first strand focuses on the stabilisation of sociomaterial networks and evolves from Actor Network Theory (ANT). Often used as an all-encompassing theory, which was never its aim according to one of its key proponents (Callon, 1999, p. 194), the ANT tradition offers a radical rethinking of the conceptual dichotomies and divisions between knowledge and artefact, nature and culture, human and non-human, and micro- and macro-level phenomena that commonly shape our ontological understanding of the world (Crawford, 2004). Subsequently, every entity is simultaneously an actor (material entity) and network (relational connection) within a greater heterogeneous assemblage of knowledge, technology and sociocultural webs. Therefore, this research trajectory is most associated with studies exploring how various people and objects come together to constitute a given phenomenon.

Central to this concern is how, within the swirls of continually imbricating aspects of life, entities come to be stabilised. For example, Science, Technology and Society Studies (STS) has used ANT as a means of exploring how technological systems are enacted through the imbrication of human and non-human entities, or 'actants' (Jensen et al., 2009). Here we see how research focuses on the 'flows of translation' (Latour, 2005, p. 321) as a means of making sense of a given phenomenon. This has resulted in a focus on the processes of how phenomenon (such as IT systems requiring new technology–human interactive practices) come to enact new performativities.

More recently, Orlikowski' and Scott's work (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008; Scott & Orlikowski, 2012) has developed these tenets in line with a processual view. Here they

emphasise the inextricable 'becoming' of matter and the social. In other words, even the smallest unit of analysis is neither a material nor a social entity, but rather the intra-action of the 'social' and 'material', illustrating that they are not just different, separable elements, but are in fact impossible to extricate or distinguish. In subscribing to this intra-active agenda, sociomaterial research cannot prioritise either the social or material over the other at an ontological level because they are 'mutually presupposing, defining and implying each other' (Santos, 2015, p. 439).

A second area gaining traction within sociomaterial research in business and management emerges from an explicit focus on different modes of being and knowing within sociomaterial entanglements. Such work carries sympathies with the 'body turn' within sociology in the 1990s (e.g. Turner, 1984; Featherstone et al., 1991), and is increasingly influenced by both the posthumanist theories of Haraway (1991), Barad (2007), and Braidotti (2013), and the emerging area of new materialisms (e.g. Coole and Frost, 2010; Pitts-Taylor, ed., 2016). In this alternate stream, researchers seek to consider materiality not just in terms of flesh, but also as encompassing multiple actants that both emerge from and 'make up' other entities (such as bacteria), although emphasise that these may not have equal force or power. Similar to approaches focusing on stability as a sociomaterial accomplishment, authors working in this emerging area share a concern with different modes of agency, emphasising ongoing processes of mutual imbrication. By contrast, however, they place an emphasis on contingency and a lack of fixity as constituting both bodies and the rest of the world. Therefore, the body cannot be anything other than simultaneously corporeal and social. This is captured in conceptions of embodiment that refer to the sociomateriality of the organisational members and the ensuing 'negotiation of everyday life in relation to the material world and to the creation of social life' (Dale & Burrell, 2008, p. 215).

New materialisms is certainly a fruitful area for business and management researchers. Ashcraft et al. (2009) suggest that bodies at work are a particularly ripe site for considering sociomateriality because while we may 'overlay them with meaning, bodies reject the say of symbolism with their susceptibility to injury, illness, hunger, reproduction, aging, and death' (Ashcraft et al., 2009, p. 32). This critiques studies of embodiment that have tended to consider the body as a site for exploring particular phenomenon (such as power), often relegating the ways in which the anatomical and biological aspects of matter come into being. Alternatively, sociomateriality affords a place for these physical elements without reducing them to realist interpretations, as shown by Dale and Latham (2015) who explore a not-for-profit organisation providing technological support for disabled clients. In doing so, they highlight the value of exploring the physicality of matter as integral to the consideration of sociocultural dynamics surrounding embodiment and organising.

While attending to the more nuanced theoretical particularities and competing perspectives within a sociomaterial approach is the focus for another chapter in another book, for empirical researchers, most sociomaterial studies highlight three commitments that we can use as guidelines for developing sociomaterial research designs, fieldwork and data analysis: relationality, action and in-situ process.

Relationality

Rather than considering phenomenon as distinct, self-sealed entities, sociomaterial researchers begin from the assumption that everything exists only in relation through the configuring, cohering and reconfiguration of particular entanglements. This emphasises how all aspects of the world are relationally constituted: continually coiled into relationships that create different phenomena,

effectively held together within relations (Law, 2004). To understand the sociomaterial nature of work, therefore, we have to explore these 'composite and shifting assemblages' (Orlikowski and Scott, 2008, p. 455). Consequently, a lot of sociomaterial research in MOS focuses on these various assemblages involved in a particular aspect of work, paying special attention to the connections, separations or distinctions that constitute a given phenomenon. For example, in a study of employee routines and technology in a US automaker, Leonardi (2011, p. 147) suggests that 'when they [human and material agencies] become imbricated – interlocked in particular sequences – they together produce, sustain, or change either routines or technologies'.

Underpinning this commitment is a concern with 'entanglement'; a concept derived from quantum physics and mostly associated with the work of Barad (2007), although employed by a range of scholars including Hodder (2012) and Ingold (2008). Entanglement speaks to the idea of reciprocal ontologies that deny the possibility of entities existing in and of themselves. As Barad (2007, p. ix) suggests, 'Existence is not an individual affair. Individuals do not pre-exist their interactions; rather, individuals emerge through and as part of their entangled intra-relating'. As such, entities are continually made, remade or transformed through reciprocal relations, exposing the world and all its constitutive entities as hybrids, emergent through 'imperfect stitching'. Elsewhere, Pickering (1995) has echoed similar sentiments through referring to a 'mangle of practice' as a way of exploring patterned networks through which different entities co-emerge to create various performances and practices. This has particular consequences for how we conceptualise action when studying organisations as being neither the property of human or non-human entities, but rather emergent through collective coalescence in a given context (Latour, 2000).

Action

The second characteristic of sociomaterial research is an emphasis on the active work required in order for practices or entities to emerge and lead to particular accomplishments through sociomaterial relations. For example, in early work exploring research laboratories, Callon (1986, p. 20) showed how laboratories ‘simultaneously rebuild and link the social and natural context upon which they act’. In other words, sociomateriality allows us to explore how boundaries, organising processes or ideas are afforded in everyday working practices. However, sociomaterial research focuses not so much on a ‘thing’ itself, but on its ‘use’ (or practice) as enfolded in a web of other uses. In other words, ‘what matters most about an artifact is not what it’s made out of but what it allows people to do’ (Leonardi, 2010). This requires the interrogation of the complex workings of inputs, outputs and the relational effects of these webs and their constitutive entities.

This focus on action brings up some questions surrounding ontology and agency where multiple modes of agency inevitably exist (Pickering, 1995). Sociomaterial researchers consider not simply human-orientated action or capability, but how agency is implicated in the capacities of various sociomaterial relations. For example, attention may be directed to the particular ways of working afforded by the specificities of the human-computer entanglements of an IT infrastructure. Some authors, such as Jensen et al. (2009) in their study of a corporate codes of ethics in an information and communications technology (ICT) firm, choose to narrow their focus to particular modes of ontology (such as focusing only on humans) and the ‘work’ that is undertaken to achieve given phenomena. However, accounts following the work of Barad (2003, p. 808) may argue for paying particular attention to different modes of being and knowing, as these are foundational to understanding the various enactments and accomplishments surrounding the

phenomenon being studied. In our concern with how the ‘missing masses’ of non-human entities (Latour, 1992) come to actively constitute organisational life then, recognising the multiplicity of distributed action is vital, although the extent to which research explicitly discusses the modes of agency in various guises differs amongst MOS scholars. Overall though, sociomateriality accepts that although the world *appears* to be full of ontologically discrete entities and phenomena, they never occur naturally or in isolation, and require work to accomplish or enact particular events, ideas or entities.

In-Situ Process

Contributing to the picture of the sociomaterial world as one of dynamism and constant reconfigurations evolving out of the two above characteristics, the third feature of sociomaterial research is its awareness of situated matter and meaning. In other words, it is not enough to acknowledge the inextricability of the social and material. What must also be taken into account is the entangled ideological, cultural, symbolic, embodied and physical expressions of sociomaterial processes in-situ. Context-rich accounts of practices and assemblages are required since numerous different elements coalesce and dissipate at particular points in time and space. Many researchers, for example, have found it useful to explore sociomaterial flows through tracing the ‘evolution’ of an assemblage. For instance, the implementation of a significantly new aspect of a workplace (such as a technology or piece of equipment) provides a built-in timeline of this new aspect being introduced into an always fluctuating web of relations. This can be seen in the work of Barrett et al. (2012), who trace the introduction and subsequent sociomaterial reconfiguration surrounding a new pharmaceutical dispensing technology. Alternatively, we may focus on particular spatial points of significance in a case study as in Johri’s

(2011) exploration of software developers working across different geographical locations, or investigate how a new clinical information system influences spatial relations (e.g. Jones, 2014).

However, researching in-situ processes should always be mindful of bounding through a particular object. To counter this, Orlowski (1992) developed a theoretical model for taking into account the temporal process of the development, integration and use of a new technology for implementation in organisations. In doing so, she purposefully highlights the pre-introduction phase of the technology's existence that is often excluded from sociomaterial research, drawing attention to the fact that throughout all stages of the technology's existence, it is embedded in a network of human agents, technological processes and artefacts, and institutional properties. The inculcation of these practices, of course, occurs within historical and political legacies that may be deeply embedded in particular organisations or occupations and subsequently must be taken into account in situating matter and meaning. Elsewhere, Boos et al. (2013) emphasise how introducing quality assurance practices as a result of technological developments may undermine historical assumptions customers hold about pharmacies being safe, expert spaces. Similarly, Oborn et al. (2013) show the importance of historical legacies in the medical profession, suggesting they are integral to the enactment of sociomaterial webs in the development of health policy.

These three aspects mean that as sociomaterial researchers we become concerned with Organisation as 'an enactment, a matter of possibilities for reconfiguring entanglements' (Barad, 2012, p. 54), which holds significant implications for our empirical research practices. In particular, to help orientate ourselves to these agential sensibilities within an entangled world, new vocabulary and ways of researching may be required. As such, sociomateriality departs from the idea of people and nodes forming perfect and complete connections, thus suggesting agency can

be 'pinpointed' or bounded. Instead it allows us to think of the (organisational) world as 'meshwork' consisting of 'interwoven lines ... along which materials flow, mix and mutate' (Ingold, 2007, p. 35) in ways that are not fully joined up and where 'nothing ever quite fits' (Ingold, 2012, p. 15). With this in mind, we now consider how this translates into the practicalities of undertaking qualitative research.

COLLECTING DATA

Which actor should be chosen? Which one should be followed and for how long? And if each actor is made of another bee's nest swarming in all directions and it goes on indefinitely, then when the hell are we supposed to stop? (Latour, 2005, p. 121)

What should be clear by now is that the social and material are not mutually exclusive entities but rather mutually intra-acting in the situated practice of work, although not necessarily equal. Therefore, approaches to data collection and analysis must be sufficiently sensitive to this inextricability, mindful not to trivialise or privilege each as a domain, or inadvertently perpetuate a false sense of separation. Easier said than done! So, what is unique about data collection within sociomaterial studies? A closer look at the extant empirical research suggests that the development of a montage of data collection methods helps to provide multiple perspectives that can partly help to avoid descending into either a realist or representational realm. In particular, there is an emphasis on the 'following' of certain aspects when empirically exploring the sociomateriality of organisational phenomenon. Such an approach is based on Latour's work (2005) that suggests tracing actor-networks and the assemblages they are entangled within, requiring researchers to 'follow the actors themselves' (Latour, 2005, p. 12). This is achieved, according to Latour (1999), through focusing on attribution (or characteristics of various agents); distribution

(of different properties); connections (between the various entities); and transformation (to create these different aspects). However, since sociomateriality posits that all phenomena are constituted by a proliferation of dynamic, uncertain boundaries, and diffuse entities, this process requires a number of practical decisions to be made.

How to Follow

Undertaking sociomaterial research requires a particular orientation to the choice of methods. Textual methods (such as written observations and interviews) still dominate sociomaterial research, despite the recognition that this may privilege social and discursive elements, and ‘flatten’ the physicality of practice. As such, in their deployment, sociomaterial researchers are required to avoid either separating or prioritising elements of the sociomaterial landscape. To avoid inadvertently prioritising symbolic or ideational aspects (subsequently reducing matter to a prop in the enactment of organisational life), multi-method approaches are common. Case study approaches have been used to great effect, where multiple forms of data collection help to track different enactments. For example, Styhre (2011) employed multiple methods in his case study approach to explore the ‘production flows’ in construction as constituted by the interaction of tools, routines and different organisational members. Jensen et al. (2009) also used a case study approach to explore the implementation of a corporate code of ethics, drawing on interviews, documents, media reports, an ethics training DVD and participant observation. Dale and Latham (2015) similarly undertook a field-based case study of an organisation that provided disabled people with technology to decrease social isolation. Although presented as a case study, their use of a participant observation diary and semi-structured interviews was more reflexive in nature, integrating the positionality of the researcher

within various enactments. This concern with writing the sociomateriality of the researcher into the research is more common amongst sociomaterial research that uses multiple modes of data collection informed by ethnographic sensibilities, spending a significant amount of time in the field. Beane and Orlikowski (2015) undertook a long-term field study (14 months) of night rounds in an intensive care unit with robotic telepresence technology, with data collection comprised of researcher observations, and formal and informal interviews with staff. An earlier study by Orlikowski (1992) involved eight months of ethnographic fieldwork exploring the development, integration and use of productivity technology employing methods including participant observation, documentation, unstructured and semi-structured interviews, and interactions with participants and with technology. Such an approach helps the researcher gain an insight into the different textures that enact organisational practices from different perspectives and levels.

The use of fieldnotes also provides the opportunity to articulate practice beyond ad verbatim accounts, and the inclusion of images in published sociomaterial research contributes to gaining different insights into different modes of reciprocity that occur within organisations. Within these fieldnotes, researchers focus on the real-time entwinement of various people and objects, allowing them to zoom in on the capacities afforded in the relationship between seemingly discrete entities or practices. Jones (2014) used the example of staff writing on paper towels or kidney dishes. If the physical surface of these objects did not allow individuals to write on them with a pen, and the staff member did not realise its potential to be written on, or had time and spatial limitations that prevented an alternative object being used, then the documentation or note-taking could not occur, at least not in this exact manner. Fieldnote writing thus requires a particular telos or sensibility by the researcher in order to trace different elementals of a sociomaterial network

or web. Jones (2014, p. 897), emphasises this focus must be on practice, rather than discourse. This means not simply exploring what ideologies may support or construct practice, but rather appreciating it as one elemental part that is mutually dependent on other aspects of activity which all lead to organisational accomplishments.

The complexity of these interdependencies and different modes of agency make such research ripe for forms of data collection that embrace multimodality. Yet, despite their evident potential for methods to explore, for example, 'tactile interaction between humans and objects' (Dant, 2005, p. 8), sociomaterial researchers have yet to fully embrace alternative modes of data collection, despite the plethora of different methods covered elsewhere in this book such as photography or more sensual or affective methods. This is surprising given Suchman's (1987) highly influential work using videography as a means of exploring IT intra-actions. One possible reason for this is a hesitance to fetishise the field in any way through mistaking artefacts for discrete objects (such as those 'captured' in photographs) and thus complete and available for individual analytical scrutiny.

Such methods are valuable in many ways, particularly as they provide the potential for researchers to capture ongoing processes of materialisation. This is vital since sociomaterial practices are highly contingent and improvisatory, meaning the researcher cannot predict when important moments of performativity may occur in everyday practice and what elements or subjects are key to these enactments. Moreover, it is often the emergent unintended consequences that are of interest to the researcher, and it is only through retrospective revisiting of data that the processes critical to the explicit materialisation of such consequences may be identified. Consequently, save travelling back in time, there is no way the researcher can know what to focus on prior to, or even during, their observations! The implementation of these non-textual methods, then, may provide

a method that allows us to glimpse (albeit partially) these moments in their multiplicity. Subsequently, techniques such as utilising video recording technology with the ability to capture multilevel data are valuable, as are multiple methods. This helps to arm the researcher with a means of exploring the subtle, organic and often unpredictable processes and practices through which sociomaterial consequences arise and shape organisations, long after they have happened.

What to Follow

Given the emphasis on intra-action and the complexity of organisational enactments, knowing what to focus on in the field is not always obvious at first. For instance, Orlikowski (2007) is critical of the tendency of MOS to only focus on instances when the relationality of organisational materiality is emphasised, such as in times of implementation or change regarding physical or technological structures or systems. Although, '*every organizational practice is always bound with materiality*' (Orlikowski, 2007, p. 1436, original italics), it is often difficult to know exactly where to begin empirical research, since everything may be argued as relationally constituted with everything else, leaving the researcher with no clear beginning or end.

To negotiate this challenge, we may turn to Ashcraft et al.'s (2009, p. 35) reflection that 'Organizational order "materializes" at the dynamic junction of objects, bodies, physical and spatial configurations, economic and institutional imperatives, and Discourses'. In one sense, thinking of these elements as amalgamating to produce ubiquitous practices (such as culture, or change initiatives) may be useful in considering where to start empirically. For example, researchers may choose to follow something that they can see is simultaneously a social and physical object. Jensen et al.'s (2009) study of the implementation of a corporate code of ethics

is one such example, whereby the policy is not simply seen as ‘producing’ documentation, but is enacted through the entanglement of documentation, talk, practices and events. Ashcraft et al. (2009) give another example of an organisational contract. In this instance, the contract appears to be a static collection of paper; however, through its signing a range of compulsions or actions spring forth, and subsequently we see how the contract, mobilised through intent, actually does something. In this sense, the contract is presented as a ‘textual agent’ (Ashcraft et al., 2009, p. 36) – an entity that carries an agential force in its capacities to effect action. This echoes the concept of object-person biographies drawn upon in consumer research, where ‘networks of objects, persons, and practices might interplay with one another’ (Epp & Price, 2010, p. 821). Other researchers such as Dale (2005) focus on an organisational imperative, such as control, and explore the various artefacts that enact control including documentation surrounding building plans and company reports.

Alternatively, if it appears that a certain object presents itself as central to the phenomenon being studied, researchers may choose to commence their research with a specific physical artefact that is perceived as important in their study, such as the product the organisation produces, a uniform or a manual. This may form the basis of initial research interactions through picking what we will term an ‘object-of-convenience’ to denote this as a methodological object, rather than a physical object with immutable qualities. For example, researchers may choose to apply principles of object interviewing, conceptualised by Nordstrom (2013, p. 12) as an ‘entangled conversational interview of objects and subjects, during which I [the researcher] mediated folds of objects, subjects, events, and a life’. Applying this technique may begin to help unpick various webs of significance which are fundamental to the enactment of the entity under study. This can serve as an entry point into the sociomaterial

meshwork of the organisation, but subsequent study should leave open the possibility to displace the initial artefact or show it to be a ‘red herring’ in terms of its centrality to a given phenomenon. This is therefore different to studying an object to understand the symbolism or social meaning imbued within the object by a particular group. Instead, the ‘object’ must be portrayed as not only shaping, but also shaped by, organisational social dynamics.

Other studies may follow a specific event or episode. This provides one way of capturing the simultaneity of physical and symbolic aspects of work across the work of different actors. For example, Nyberg (2009) concentrates on a customer service call as an opportunity for exploring the entanglement of call centre operatives and computers, while Constantinides and Barrett (2012) focus on two emergency call incidents as a way of exploring organisational coordination. These events are presented as encounters that can show the kaleidoscope of sociomaterial enactments required for a task to be achieved. In many ways, this helps to explore intra-action at the initial level of empirical data collection. While particular objects may be identified as central to particular formations and practices, their material agency is subsumed within the context of the event or episode. In other words, a focus on a particular event allows the researcher to explore how various traces of objects, ideas and knowledge intra-act as part of an entity that has particular capacities.

Finally, in choosing what to follow, researchers may wish to focus on phenomena that they think may dramatically morph and evolve through sociomaterial relations, possibly resulting in the emergence of new performativities. Latour (2005, p. 227) suggests that ‘one must follow them when they *multiply* entities and again when they *rarefy* entities’, suggesting that it is in their transformation we can explore the connective sociomaterial strands. This is demonstrated in Scott and Orlikowski’s (2012) account of online travel rating sites, where they show

how online activity surrounding rankings on sites such as TripAdvisor enact new practices for those agents involved, such as how the hospitality services are assessed. Here we can see how the evolution of ‘ranking’ creates new modes of thinking and acting through the capacities of web 2.0 materialities, such as algorithms, databases and the constant update of reviews about the (travel) product (p. 29).

When to Follow

The third empirical consideration arises from the way researchers choose to plot the sociomaterial phenomenon. To articulate this further, we draw on the metaphor of ‘tracking’ as a methodological imperative that speaks to sociomaterial intra-action. Tracking captures the sentiment of observing actions, practices and enactments that progress or move in some way, but the elements that result in the creation of a particular path are inseparable from the path itself. At the same time, tracks are not durable or continuous structures, but are unstable, contingent and constantly shapeshift, transform or disappear. Ingold (2015, p. 63), in his evocative account of lines, emphasises this intra-play:

While a trained eye and touch can read much from a single footprint, even more can be read from a series of prints. Such a series, observed in sequence comprises a track. If the same track is trodden often enough, the many individual prints merge into a continuous path. One cannot, then read individuals movements from a path, but only those commonly or collectively made.

In other words, modes of data collection must enable the exploration of how enactments emerge, move and coalesce within a context, and appreciate the contingency of these various enactments and their embeddedness in a given space and time.

A vast majority of studies use time as a tracking device for two reasons. First, time acts as a diviner to guide data collection pragmatically. However, the challenge of following through time as a way of

exploring sociomaterial dynamics is that due to the always-becoming nature of the world, researchers can never enter into linear investigations ‘at the beginning of things’ (Jensen et al., 2009, p. 534). Instead the lens of pragmatism must be applied. This application is illustrated by Jensen et al. (2009, p. 534) who suggest ‘the researcher has to construct a beginning, to be somewhere and study something, and the illustration starts here with an extract from the introduction in the parent company’s CCE [corporate code of ethics]’. In this approach, care must be taken to ensure the sociomaterial dynamics themselves are not viewed as exclusively working within a linear Newtonian research process, but rather recognise that temporality itself is integral to various enactments, such as speed, intensity, patterning and pauses (cf. Lefebvre, 2004).

Second, time is central to the flow of various enactments. As Ahmed (2010, p. 256) explains, ‘Time “gives form”, which suggests that “matter” is not inert or given but is always in a process of “materializing”’. Ashcraft suggests this is important since different temporalities – not simply a Newtonian linear time – influence enactment: ‘Human-made or otherwise, organizational artifacts do things; their existence and features guide interaction even as they also encapsulate past interactions’ (Ashcraft et al., 2009, p. 29). We can see such sentiments at work in Venters et al.’s (2014, p. 939) study of sociomaterial configurations in the development of a computing grid system for particle physicists through considerations of occupationally and historically embedded conceptions of temporality. Here ‘the future coordination of the grid was entangled with the anticipated future of technology including positive and negative changes in hardware and software’. In other words, different anticipations of the future were important in chains of enactment surrounding the creation and coordination of the system. Moreover, the tensions between particle physicists’ pace of development vis-à-vis the speed preferred by computing specialists was inseparable from the capacities

of the computing infrastructure, demonstrating how 'grid infrastructure emerges through the tensions and interplay between human and material agencies shaping ICT development and grid coordination' (Venters et al., 2014, p. 941).

This focus on movement as a part of empirical following practices in sociomateriality has also led to researchers tracking over space, taking care to ground the work in material place and location as well as abstracted meanings surrounding space. As Leonardi and Barley (2008, p. 167) identify, most sociomaterial researchers have an inherent bias towards the social, to the extent that 'even though they may select research sites based on their interest in a particular technology, data collection typically involves charting patterns of use, interaction and organizing'. To avoid these empirical methods closing down and failing to account for the complexity of sociomaterial dynamics, they allow for the biography of the entity to be conceptualised 'not only as a trajectory in time, but as movement within and between a number of social settings and groups' (Leonardi & Barley, 2008, p. 167). This may often include methods that enable the same enactment to be considered in a number of ways. For example, in their study of the implementation of a clinical information system in a critical care unit, Jones (2014, p. 905) uses diagrams of ward layouts as a means of emphasising the spatiality of wards and sociomaterial practices involved in working around the patient. Data collection may alternatively focus on following at a geographical or topographical level. This is where the changing ebbs and flows of an organisational landscape provide a setting for exploring the sociomateriality of organising. Fenwick (2012, p. 13) drew on this approach in the coproduction of rural policing practice, highlighting how the 'opportunistic leveraging of particular material and social dynamics that emerge in specific situations' was important to accomplishing policing goals. Here we see that the actual physicality of the space (e.g. small communities where people intimately

share leisure spaces, such as the village pub) is not simply about physical location where things are done, or about symbolically important spaces, but rather about how the socio-symbolic and material are woven together in a way that constitute policing capacities.

The final way of tracking that is common within sociomaterial studies is more analytical, whereby researchers attempt to explore webs through the movements of actors and actants across and between different organisational registers, such as physical, ideological and symbolic registers. This is not about considering these various levels as separate in and of themselves, but rather recognising that different kinds of data are likely to reveal different ways of viewing enactment. For example, researchers may consider how formal company documentation may enact different capacities to online chatrooms. In many studies, the blurring between the physical and the virtual is facilitated through the work that occurs between different registers. Elsewhere, Jones (2014, p. 909) discusses how 'the introduction of the CIS [computer-based clinical information system] may be seen as creating a new, digital materiality, a virtual patient, represented by the CIS data, that became increasingly central to care practices'. In other words, the simultaneous existence of the patient as a physical and virtual body results in new performative practices. This is not to preclude one register or another, as such divisions are impossible. Rather, it is to explore how the foregrounding and backgrounding of different sociomaterial configurations emerge in practice, and how this allows particular capacities to emerge. This is explored to great effect by Bechky (2003) who considers how machines and documentation as artefacts coordinate work by enacting relations and task boundaries between occupational communities. As she puts it, 'Artefacts, subject to interpretation, participate in the constitution of the social dynamics in the organization' (p. 746); and this occurs through the cross fertilisation of different organisational registers. Other

technology studies also reflect post-dualistic efforts, often drawing on the work of structuration theories that have influenced scholars including Orlikowski (1992, 1996, 2000) and projects concerned with technology adoption and use (e.g. Barley, 1988; Ciborra et al., 2000). Such research tracks the various texturing of organisational life to identify the bricolage of rules, norms and usage structures that form part of user–machine experiences.

DATA ANALYSIS IN SOCIOMATERIAL RESEARCH

Finally, it is worth reflecting on current approaches to analysing data within sociomaterial research. In some senses, the process of analysis heavily depends on what the researcher is trying to explore. Nyberg (2009, p. 1185) suggests that this varies across sociomaterial disciplines where studies exploring technology in organisations are often focused on how stability occurs, while those more influenced by a new materialisms agenda and the work of Haraway and Barad emphasise the fluidity and contingency of relations. As with any qualitative data analysis, the question of where to begin is also fraught with challenges. The emphasis on grounding analysis in the common, mundane, quotidian of everyday practice remains important. For example, Dale and Burrell (2008) caution that analytical choices aimed at theory building may abstract ‘social’ constructs to the point that the contextually embedded sociomaterial conditions are overlooked. Similarly, Latour (2005, p. 137) cautions about exploring connections in analysis in an abstract manner: ‘If connections are established between sites, it should be done through *more* descriptions, not by suddenly taking a free ride through all-terrain entities like Society, Capitalism, Empire, Norms, Individualism, Fields, and so on’.

For these reasons, it is common to begin sociomaterial research through grounded

coding. For example, Beane and Orlikowski (2015) offer one of the few studies that provides some detail as to their process of analysis. They state that their analysis consisted of an initial round of descriptive coding surrounding work-related themes followed by a second round of interpretive analysis of provisional settlements: moments in which conflict or disagreement were momentarily suspended, allowing work to continue (Beane & Orlikowski, 2015, p. 1556). On closer inspection of these moments, they identified particular analytical coordinates that appeared to be at work in upholding the mutual imbrication of the sociomaterial context. Similarly, in our own research, we have found three points of analytical endeavour important.

Identifying Action

As discussed earlier, sociomaterial research is committed to exploring enactment and the emergence of activity as not simply derived from human interaction, but rather as emerging through the entanglement of various ‘mindful matter’. Recent approaches in the social sciences have taken this point towards a more radical politics of how agency must be considered in all its ontological plurality. In other words, animals, plants and objects exert intentionality in ways that may be both beyond and not immediately connected to humans.

In light of this, one way to commence is a form of ‘actant analysis’ through identifying key elements of a chain of enaction. For example, Orlikowski’s (1992) development of a theoretical model for the analysis of the sociomateriality of organisational technologies lists a number of human agents, technological factors and institutional properties requiring consideration. This is not about simply recognising the outcomes of organisational processes and practices, but identifying who and what are legitimate actors within these aspects of organisational life (Ashcraft et al., 2009, p. 36). Cooren (2008) suggests that in undertaking the latter, a

metaphorical form of *ventriloquism* is necessitated, in that the researcher must interpret and convey what non-verbal entities are ‘already saying’, and their consequent role in constituting the organisation. While human actants can describe their intent and actions, and have the capacity to correct misinterpretations, non-human actants do not, and therefore ‘nonhuman agents act largely *through* those who mobilize their “intent”’ (Ashcraft et al., 2009, p. 36). This may of course hold a danger of undermining a diffuse idea of agency or anthropomorphism.

To avoid this, other scholars have attempted to fully account for the different modes of agency, interested in the variegated ways different forces come together, assert, clash, collide or merge. A fantastic example of this can be seen in Barrett et al. (2012, p. 1458) discussing a dispensing robot in a pharmacy. They write: ‘Through intermittent malfunctions, the robots resisted and challenged the anticipated improvements in service performance. When the robots encountered errors or ceased functioning, work in the pharmacy became difficult to perform as medications housed inside the robot became inaccessible’. Here we see how the ‘robot practices’ are positioned in the research observations as exerting a mode of agency that trickles into and subsequently transforms the daily practices of the pharmacy.

Other processes of analysis look for where different modes of agency enact moments or ‘pauses’ as a way of exploring particular sociomaterial configurations. This is particularly useful in instances where the fluidity and provisional dynamics of sociomaterial relations can mean traditional methods of coding themes might oversimplify the unpredictable, scattered, entangled and intra-active accomplishments. An alternative may therefore be to design analytical frameworks specifically around various instances of coalescing and dissipation known to be recurrent in organisations. For example, as mentioned earlier, Kaplan and Orlikowski (2013) focus on what they term *provisional settlements* – the moment where there is a suspension of

disagreement or tension that allows objectives to be recognised. Nyberg (2009, p. 1182) similarly evokes Barad’s concept of ‘agential cuts’ which he argues ‘create temporal configurations, hinting at how boundaries around actors are delineated’. Such moments may be where there is a temporary emergence of distinctions, separation or boundaries. These momentary ‘local resolutions’ (Barad, 2003, p. 815) do not mean an ontological distinction of different matter, but rather allow us to analyse how particular configurations ‘rest’ and, in doing so, perform a distinction.

Relational Modes of Analysis

Although derived from social psychology (e.g. Robinson, 2011), relational analysis encourages the researcher to explore the possibility of multiple relationships that may exist beyond those where there are immediate thematic ties. This certainly speaks to sociomaterial sympathies in terms of providing a systematic way of allowing researchers to classify points of identification or directionality in a given context. Relational analysis within a sociomaterial context therefore seeks to demonstrate that it is in the continual intra-action of the material and semiotic, and between empirically distinct yet ontologically inseparable sociomaterial entities, that reality comes into being. However, as Haraway (2000, pp. 50–1) argues, ‘you can’t adequately understand the form by breaking it down to their smallest parts and then adding relationships back’. Therefore, the smallest unit of analysis in sociomaterial research cannot be anything other than the relationality between two or more entities, as without this relationality, they could not exist. Echoing this assertion is Oborn et al.’s (2013, p. 259) story of how a health policy was enacted, which draws on relational perspectives to look at how legitimacy and trust were ‘sociomaterially performed in leadership practices’. Similarly, relational analysis may help explore temporary distinctions and

the flow of movements, foregrounding or backgrounding what is taking place within the mutual imbrication of different elements of the workplace, speaking to the idea that ‘every artefact enacts its singularity through delineations of that which it incorporates and those things that are beyond its bounds’ (Suchman, 2014, p. 50).

However, the elusiveness of ‘consistent causality’ within sociomaterial relations can make relational analysis difficult, particularly for those researchers interested in re-presenting the chains of enactment within a given context. An alternative approach we have found useful is to analyse different traces, such as boundaries between human and non-human, understanding them as enactments of inclusion and exclusion. Researchers may also choose to follow Barad’s (2003, p. 803) metaphor of a ‘diffractive’ (rather than ‘reflective’) reading. This is where we focus on the enactment of boundaries through an exploration of ‘a relation of exteriority within’. For example, we may explore how seemingly separate initiatives (such as a human resource policy and the development of a new product) are invariably sociomaterially entangled in the various spaces, practices and bodies of one organisation. Analysing organisational practices through this imperative may help to interrogate seemingly separate aspects of a particular practice through questioning causalities and exploring their interference and interactions. Analysis thus concentrates on ‘how different differences get made, what gets excluded, and how those exclusions matter’ (Barad, 2007, p. 30). For instance, Barrett et al.’s (2012) study of a pharmaceutical dispensing robot analysed the transformation of relations within a healthcare setting through reconfigurations of the boundary relations between different occupation groups. Emphasising how these boundaries are constituted and how they subsequently enact other practices, Barrett et al.’s work reveals how these delineations provide various capacities for various organisational accomplishments (or alternatively, partially

close down or marginalise possible modes of practice). Elsewhere, Ashcraft et al. (2009, p. 39) argue that the circulation of texts is part of similar boundary performances suggesting ‘the texts in organizational circulation (a) form the contours of identification, legitimacy, and accountability; and (b) are affected by the symbolic-material (i.e. the communicative) responses to heterogeneous problem-solving’.

Beyond ‘Reading’ Sociomateriality

The above modes of analysis often focus on fieldwork accounts, or interview data, suggesting a deference to Latour’s rhetorical question, ‘What do we do when we trace social connections? Are we not, in effect, writing down accounts?’ (Latour, 2005, p. 122). And yet, the treatment of sociomaterial phenomena cannot be limited to witnessing, reading and subsequently writing down accounts. In fact, the practice of re-presenting may suggest we assume everything can be ‘known’, grasped, represented and therefore ‘read’ in a similar way. This betrays the complexity of exploring elements of sociomateriality that are not necessarily tangible during the initial stages of analysis, or even remain ambiguous throughout our analysis.

In moving towards modes of data analysis that prevent the intangible being written out of initial coding practices, in our own work we have found the concept of ‘sites’ a useful entry point for analysis. Sites refer to the contingent and diffuse elements of the organisational landscape that are simultaneously constituted by both tangible and intangible or ambiguous elements. However, rather than view these ‘sites’ as a predominantly neutral container for the organisational processes, sociomaterial researchers are required to consider how these sites are an intimate part of the enactment of particular practices. One study that is illustrative of analysing a ‘site’ is Dale’s (2005) work on how the present and absent (physical and imagined) spatial

elements of a workplace were purpose built to compel desired organisational subjectivities, and how this interacted with organisational discourse and patterns of communication. She concluded there to be a co-constitutive enactment in sociomaterial dimensions in which certain ways-of-being at work were afforded.

Analysing sites may help to explore dimensions that are not yet within the realm of representation or configuration but nonetheless are quilted into the phenomenon we are studying. In many ways, this has the potential to speak to the Latourian concept of 'plasma': aspects that are epistemologically ambiguous, described as 'neither behind nor especially hidden. It's in between and not made of social stuff. It is not hidden, simply unknown' (Latour, 2005, p. 244). Questions of course arise as to the extent to which we can grasp these aspects in our analysis, or whether they are, by their nature, impossible to account for, particularly when language is often predicated on reductionist binaries, and is thus unequipped to express the sociomateriality of the world as we experience it. For example, scholars such as Bell (2014, p. 151) are both curious and cynical as to whether textual description can ever truly convey the aesthetic and affective particularities of materiality, such as the gradient of light and dark, or the soundscapes accompanying daily life.

However, there is potential for researchers to begin recognising that elements of sociomateriality may resist conventional modes of knowing, but nonetheless carry powerful purchase in various accomplishments at work. These aspects that resist verbal or textual articulation such as those aspects 'felt on our pulses' (Thrift, 2008, p. 147) may include atmospheres, ambiances, silences or sensual expressions – all dimensions that can be seen as rooted in the lived affective experience of working life, or vital in how various phenomenon come to materialise. The emergence of these elements has begun to be touched on in recent work such as Beane and Orlikowski's (2015) study of the role of

robotic telepresence technology in health-care, which seeks to consider 'other aspects of the work (e.g. spatial orientation, gaze direction, gestures)' (Beane & Orlikowski, 2015, p. 1556). Similarly, Ashcraft et al. (2009) focus their analysis on heterogeneous *processes of knowing* that are co-constitutively entangled with organisational bodies, spaces and materiality, not taking a dominant epistemological position for granted in their analytical processes. Elsewhere, Endrissat and Noppeney's (2013) study shows the importance of the immaterial in sociomaterial practices through the example of perfume production, allowing glimpses of the sensual dimension of their work. From our own research (Riach & Warren, 2015, p. 789), we know that the senses are an important 'affective glue' within sociomaterial enactments that may become more important as sociomaterial processes of analysis continue to evolve in MOS.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have sought to engage with the multiplicity of approaches that constitute the field of sociomaterial research. As a broad church, we hope that this field continues to embrace the changing landscapes of organisational life and research. By means of closing, we posit where we see future possibilities for sociomaterial research.

First, as sociomateriality morphs and coalesces with new research practice, it is inevitable that like the practices we study, it will shapeshift and enact new methodological practices. The growing desire for more multimodal forms of research presentation may be a particularly potent call for sociomaterial researchers to experiment within their empirical research endeavours. For example, embedding audio-visual content into online publications as a means of simultaneously complying with and advancing academic conventions in terms of research format is

likely to allow the sociomaterial researcher not to inadvertently ‘flatten’ or betray the richness of fieldwork where their accounts can become pixelated and fragmented.

Second, sociomateriality exists in a co-eval relationship with a range of other areas of management and organisational research interested in issues of materiality, such as embodiment. Yet, with few exceptions (such as the work of Karen Dale and her colleagues), there has been relatively little hybridity between these research domains. We would argue that although there are invariably theoretical junctions to navigate, the richness of accounts surrounding the multifaceted substance of bodies, affectations and markets that exists beyond the immediate terminology and thematic concern of many sociomaterial scholars may provide the opportunity for new insights into the sociomateriality of organisational practice.

Finally, there is little doubt that given its foundations, sociomateriality is well positioned to explore new technologies that become integrated into contemporary organisational life, such as the potential of new media. However, just as sociomaterial studies reflected the rising importance of technology in organisations, they may continue to provide valuable insights into the changing contours of work. In particular, the increasing recognition of interdependencies between organisations and larger environmental forces suggest that a sociomaterial approach can provide a rich methodological repertoire that allows us to explore the ways in which sustainability and environmental issues are part of the entanglement of corporate life. For example, it may be that rather than think of nature and animals as an addendum to organisations or simply another product or commodity, we begin to explore how ‘companion species’ (Haraway, 2003) are an inextricable part of organisational fabrics. Such a focus may also additionally provide a way of considering how we take account of the plurality of different ontologies and the ethical obligations that emerge from chains of reciprocity

recognised within a sociomaterial imperative. In this sense, sociomateriality may well have the potential to introduce a new politics to the way we consider what really matters in organisations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- 1 The authors wish to express their thanks to Laura Visser and members of the CROS (Critical Reorientations of Organization and Society) research interest group at Monash University for their constructive input and feedback on earlier drafts of this chapter.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, S. (2010). Orientations matter. In D. Coole and S. Frost (Eds.) *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Ashcraft, K., Kuhn, T. and Cooren, F. (2009). Constitutional amendments: ‘Materialising’ organizational communication. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 3(1), 1–64.
- Barad, K. (2003). Posthumanist performativity: Toward an understanding of how matter comes to matter. *Signs*, 28(3), 801–31.
- Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Barad, K. (2012). Interview with Karen Barad. In R. Dolphijn and I. van Der Tuin (Eds.) *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies* (pp. 48–70). Michigan: Open Humanities Press.
- Barley, S. (1988). Technology, power, and the social organization of work. *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, 6, 33–80.
- Barrett, M., Oborn, E., Orlikowski, W. and Yates, J. (2012). Reconfiguring boundary relations: Robotic innovations in pharmacy work. *Organization Science*, 23(5), 1448–66.
- Beane, M. and Orlikowski, W. (2015). What difference does a robot make? The material enactment of distributed coordination. *Organization Science*, 26(6), 1553–73.
- Bechky, B. (2003). Sharing meaning across occupational communities: The transformation of

- understanding on a production floor. *Organization Science*, 14(3), 312–30.
- Bell, V. (2014). Photo-image. In C. Lury and N. Wakeford (Eds.) *Inventive Methods: The Hapening of the Social* (pp. 147–62). Oxford, UK: Routledge.
- Boos, D., Guenter, H., Grote, G. and Kinder, K. (2013). Controllable accountabilities: The Internet of things and its challenges for organizations. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 32(5), 449–67.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Braidotti, R. (2013). *The Posthuman*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Callon, M. (1986). The sociology of an actor-network: The case of the electric vehicle. In M. Callon, J. Law and A. Rip (Eds.) *Mapping the Dynamics of Science and Technology* (pp. 19–34). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Callon, M. (1999). Some elements of a sociology of translation: Domestication of the scallops and the fishermen of St. Brieuc Bay. In M. Biagioli (Ed.) *The Science Studies Reader* (pp. 67–83). New York: Routledge.
- Ciborra C.U., Braa K., Cordella A., Dahlbom B., Failla A., Hanseth O., Hepsø V., Ljungberg J., Monteiro E. and Simon K.A. (2000). *From Control to Drift: The Dynamics of Corporate Information Infrastructures*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Constantinides, P. and Barrett, M. (2012). A narrative networks approach to understanding coordination practices in emergency response. *Information and Organization*, 22(4), 273–94.
- Coole, D. and Frost, S. (2010). *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Cooren, F. (2008). The selection of agency as a rhetorical device opening up the scene of dialogue through ventriloquism. In E. Weigand (Ed.) *Discourse and Rhetoric* (pp. 23–38). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Crawford, C. (2004). Actor-network theory. In G. Ritzer (Ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Social Theory*, vol. 11 (pp. 1–3). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dale, K. (2005). Building a social materiality: Spatial and embodied politics in organizational control. *Organization*, 12(5), 649–78.
- Dale, K. and Burrell, G. (2008). *The Spaces of Organization and the Organization of Space: Power, Identity and Materiality at Work*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dale, K. and Latham, Y. (2015). Ethics and entangled embodiment: Bodies–materialities–organization. *Organization*, 22(2), 166–82.
- Dant, T. (2005). *Materiality and Society*. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.
- Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1980). *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Endrissat, N. and Noppeney, C. (2013). Materialising the immaterial: Relational movements in a perfume's becoming. In P. Carlile, D. Nicolini, A. Langley and H. Tsoukas (Eds.) *How Matter Matters: Objects, Artifacts, and Materiality in Organization Studies* (pp. 58–91). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Epp, A. and Price, L. (2010). The storied life of singularised objects: Forces of agency and network transformation. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36(5), 820–37.
- Featherstone, M., Hepworth, M. and Turner, B. (1991). *The Body: Social Processes and Cultural Theory*. London: Sage.
- Fenwick, T. (2012). Co-production in practice: A sociomaterial analysis. *Professions & Professionalism*, 2(2), 1–16.
- Haraway, D. (1991). *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge.
- Haraway, D. (2000). *How Like a Leaf: An Interview with Thyra Nichols Goodeve*. New York: Routledge.
- Haraway, D. (2003). *The Companion Species Manifesto*. Chicago, IL: Prickly Paradigm Press.
- Hodder, I. (2012). *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships Between Humans and Things*. London: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Ingold, T. (2007). Writing texts, reading materials. A response to my critics. *Archaeological Dialogues*, 14(1), 31–8.
- Ingold, T. (2008). Bindings against boundaries: Entanglements of life in an open world. *Environment and Planning A*, 40(8), 1796–810.
- Ingold, T. (2012). Lines and the weather: Of slugs and storms. In J. Brouwer, A. Mulder and L. Spuybroek (Eds.) *Vital Beauty: Reclaiming Aesthetics in the Tangle of Technology and Nature* (pp. 13–28). Rotterdam: V2_Publishing.

- Ingold, T. (2015). *The Life of Lines*. Oxford, UK: Routledge.
- Jensen, T., Sandström, J. and Helin, S. (2009). Corporate codes of ethics and the bending of moral space. *Organization*, 16(4), 529–45.
- Johri, A. (2011). Sociomaterial bricolage: The creation of location-spanning work practices by global software developers. *Information and Software Technology*, 53(9), 955–68.
- Jones, M. (2014). A matter of life and death: Exploring conceptualisations of sociomateriality in the context of critical care. *MIS Quarterly*, 38(3), 895–925.
- Kaplan, S. and Orlikowski, W. (2013). Temporal work in strategy making. *Organization Science*, 24(4), 965–95.
- Latour, B. (1992). 'Where are the missing masses?' The sociology of a few mundane artifacts. In W. Bijker and J. Law (Eds.) *Shaping Technology/Building Society: Studies in Sociotechnical Change* (pp. 225–58). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Latour, B. (1999). *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Latour, B. (2000). When things strike back: A possible contribution of 'science studies' to the social sciences. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 51(1), 107–24.
- Latour, B. (2005). *Re-assembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Law, J. (2004). *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. Oxford, UK: Routledge.
- Lefebvre, H. (2004). *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*. Trans. by S. Elden and G. Moore. London: Continuum.
- Leonardi, P. (2010). Digital materiality? How artifacts without matter, matter. *First Monday*, 15(6), Available from: <http://firstmonday.org/article/view/3036/2567>
- Leonardi, P. (2011). When flexible routines meet flexible technologies: Affordance, constraint, and the imbrication of human and material agencies. *MIS Quarterly*, 35(1), 147–67.
- Leonardi, P. and Barley, S. (2008). Materiality and change: Challenges to building better theory about technology and organizing. *Information and Organization*, 18(3), 159–76.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1945/2014) *Phenomenology of Perception*. Trans. D.A. Landes. London: Routledge.
- Nordstrom, S. (2013). Object-interviews: Folding, unfolding, and refolding perceptions of objects. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 12(1), 237–57.
- Nyberg, D. (2009). Computers, customer service operatives and cyborgs: Intra-actions in call centres. *Organization Studies*, 30(11), 1181–99.
- Oborn, E., Barrett, M. and Dawson, S. (2013). Distributed leadership in policy formulation: A sociomaterial perspective. *Organization Studies*, 34(2), 253–76.
- Orlikowski, W. (1992). The duality of technology: Rethinking the concept of technology in organizations. *Organization Science*, 3(3), 398–427.
- Orlikowski, W. (1996). Improvising organizational transformation over time: A situated change perspective. *Information Systems Research*, 7(1), 63–92.
- Orlikowski, W. (2000). Using technology and constituting structures: A practice lens for studying technology in organizations. *Organization Science*, 11(4), 404–28.
- Orlikowski, W. (2006). Material knowing: The scaffolding of human knowledgeability. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 15(5), 460–6.
- Orlikowski, W. (2007). Sociomaterial practices: Exploring technology at work. *Organization Studies*, 28(9), 1435–48.
- Orlikowski, W. and Scott, S. (2008). Sociomateriality: Challenging the separation of technology, work and organization. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 2(1), 433–74.
- Pickering, A. (1995). *The Mangle of Practice: Time, Agency, and Science*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Pitts-Taylor, V. (Ed.) (2016). *Mattering: Feminism, Science, and Materialism*. New York: NYU Press.
- Riach, K. and Warren, S. (2015). Smell organization: Bodies and corporeal porosity in office work. *Human Relations*, 68(5), 789–809.
- Robinson, O.C. (2011). Relational analysis: An add-on technique for aiding data integration in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 8(2), 197–209.
- Santos, G. (2015). Ontological emergence: How is that possible? Towards a new relational ontology. *Foundations of Science*, 20(4), 429–46.

- Scott, S. and Orlikowski, W. (2012). Reconfiguring relations of accountability: Materialization of social media in the travel sector. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 37(1), 26–40.
- Spinoza, B. (1994). *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works*. Trans. by E. Curley. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Styhre, A. (2011). Sociomaterial practice and the constitutive entanglement of social and material resources: The case of construction work. *VINE Journal of Information and Knowledge Management Systems*, 41(4), 384–400.
- Suchman, L. (1987). *Plans and Situated Actions: The Problem of Human-Machine Communication*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Suchman, L. (2014). Configuration. In C. Lury and N. Wakeford (Eds.) *Inventive methods: The Happening of the Social* (pp. 48–60). Oxford, UK: Routledge.
- Thrift, N. (2008). *Non-representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect*. London: Routledge.
- Turner, B. (1984). *The Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory*. Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell Publishing.
- Venters, W., Oborn, E. and Barrett, M. (2014). A trichordal temporal approach to digital coordination: The sociomaterial mangling of the CERN Grid. *MIS Quarterly*, 38(3), 927–49.

Analysing Fiction: The Example of Women's Work in Disney Animations (1937–2013)

Mark Learmonth and Martyn Griffin

INTRODUCTION

Movies can and do have tremendous influence in shaping young lives in the realm of entertainment towards the ideals and objectives of normal adulthood. (Walt Disney cited in Russell & Waters, 2010)

From Aesop's fables to Grimm's fairy tales, fiction has been utilised to help children explore and understand the world around them, to instruct them in moral and ethical ways of behaving or simply excite or frighten them for its own sake (Appleyard, 1991). In the twentieth century, for the first time, fiction could be brought to life on screen and what was once only imagined inside the reader's mind could now be collectively crafted, viewed and experienced. This opened up new opportunities to analyse and understand the text *and* images being transmitted to those viewing the films, decoding effects on audiences and their experiences (for an early example of this, see Eisenstein, 1942, 1949). Walt Disney, and the writers and

animators within his studios, were masters at adapting fiction and bringing it to life through moving pictures in a way that captivated audiences at the time, and continues to do so today. We tend to think about Disney animations as being all about romance and adventure. They are, of course, about such things – but as we show in this chapter the theme of work has arguably been just as dominant albeit much less discussed.

As we see in Disney's first four feature-length animations, the issues of work and of forced labour, in particular, are paramount. In *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), for instance, songs like 'Whistle while you work' and 'Heigh ho!' offer distinct perceptions of work. *Pinocchio* (1940) and *Dumbo* (1941) provide a somewhat chilling (and some have argued, racist) account of forced labour involving imprisoned circus animals, young boys kidnapped to be abused and exploited on stage, and in the mines (in the former) and 'happy hearted' workers who 'slave until [they're] almost dead'³ (in the latter).

Meanwhile, the most memorable and most repeated segment of *Fantasia* (1940), 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice', famously depicts Mickey Mouse struggling with heavy buckets of water and misusing his master's powers to try and make his job easier, with terrible, but somewhat humorous, implications.

And these are by no means the exception. These first four Disney feature-length animations capture a distinct and sequential characterisation of work that, we argue, can be found in a large number of their subsequent productions either through close imitation or, more recently and exceptionally, through clear and conscious rejection. However, whilst numerous studies look at the Disney princess phenomenon (Cummins, 1995; Lieberman, 1972) – and the corrosive effect of their apparent worklessness on young girls' aspirations (Orenstein, 2014) – fewer studies explore what women and girls actually *do* within animations in terms of work. Indeed, they typically overlook work altogether.

In this chapter, we explore the depictions and imitations of gendered work found within Disney 'Classic' animations to provide an insight into analysing fiction within films. We focus upon the first era of Disney from *Snow White* to *The Rescuers* (1937–77), exploring how these and subsequent modern Disney animations have constructed patterns of gendered work through the ideas of Judith Butler (1990, 1993). We feel that her notion of performativity in which 'gender is an impersonation, [and] becoming gendered involves impersonating an ideal that nobody actually inhabits' (Butler, 1992, p. 85) evokes the role that animation plays in the lives of many young girls and boys as they watch and then imitate (or 'do') gender in a particular way. In doing so, we show how animation plays a central role in constructing organisational gender norms in society and argue that learning methods for reflexively and critically analysing films of this kind as cultural texts is essential for students and academics alike.

BUTLER AND GENDER

In *Gender Trouble* (1990) Butler provides a new way of thinking about gender which challenges the natural assumptions about what is to be a man or a woman. Rather than thinking, as is usually done, that the body is a fact of nature – either male or female – Butler suggests that this is a cultural inscription that is performed – in the first instance – upon a child (the midwife says 'It's a girl!'). In this sense, and throughout our lives, our gender is constructed by our own repetitive performance of this role. To this extent, 'gender is a stylized repetition of acts ... which are internally discontinuous ... [so that] the appearance of substance is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief' (Butler, 1988, p. 520). Butler's notion of performativity in which 'gender is an impersonation, [and] becoming gendered involves impersonating an ideal that nobody actually inhabits' (Butler, 1992, p. 85).

Indeed, we contend that Butler's performative take on gender is especially productive in the context of animation. After all, there are very few other forms of art that are able to play with gender and destabilise our understanding of it so easily – to reveal its imitations and impersonations – as animation. Many characters are apparently genderless, either because as animals or aliens or objects – or by the character being purposefully left androgynous – no gender is conferred upon them directly (though it may be inferred by the watcher in a more or less unexamined way). In a more general sense, then, animations have a particularly revealing element to them as they are not bound by the usual constraints of non-animated film. They provide almost unlimited scope for individuals to bring their imaginations to life on screen without concerns about whether it is possible in the real world or whether a young actor or

actress is either physically or mentally capable of performing the dialogue or scenes. It is, in short – even more so than other types of film – a place of fantasy, a heterotopic space (Foucault, 1984) in which we argue more is likely to be revealed about often hidden or unexamined cultural stereotypes and norms.

It is possible, in this sense, to understand gender as a performance, a citation of all previous performances of gender, rather than a natural reflection of what it is to be male or female. In Butler's terms, 'one is subjected and subjectified within discourses, and becomes a subject through performativity, which is not an act, nor a performance, but constantly repeated "acts" that reiterate norms' (Butler, 1993, pp. 12, 240 ff.). That is, our repeated attempts to be 'female' or 'male' become normalised over time. In this sense, 'matter is constructed not as a site but as a process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter' (Butler, 1990, p. xiii). To be clear, Butler is not suggesting the subject is free to pick and choose the gender that he or she is going to enact. In her discussion of this issue, Salih (2006, pp. 56, 58) compares it instead to a wardrobe in which 'the subject has a limited number of "costumes" from which to make a constrained choice of gender style ... the ripped clothes and the sequins representing my attempts to "do" my gender in subversive and unexpected ways'.

In the context of the Disney princess, this analogy is especially salient. Author 1's daughter has a whole 'wardrobe' of princess dresses ranging from Cinderella to Snow White mixed together with her other pirate and fireman's outfits that she uses to play games on a regular basis. One of her favourite roles is to play the prince – Prince Ashitaka from Studio Ghibli's *Princess Mononoke* (1997) – suggesting there is scope for her to make potentially subversive and unexpected choices. It is only an option though, because she has been exposed to different types of characters and continues to be so without any

expectation of what she *should* be doing. It is interesting to note that the very creation of Disney princess costumes was inspired by young girls wearing home-made princess outfits at *Disney on Ice* shows, that a Disney CEO subsequently noticed as a missed merchandising opportunity (Orenstein, 2014). Many parents might still choose to ban princess costumes (and games) altogether from their children's play in fear of the subtle gender lessons they may be teaching their daughters about things like work – given many of the examples presented in this chapter, it is easy to understand why! (see Coyne et al., 2016). Another option though, might be to explore and embrace a wider array of 'costumes' (broadly speaking) to encourage experimentation that will increase the possibility of disrupting rigid gender norms and roles.

However, we are under no illusion that this will be a straightforward task. In *Men and Women of the Corporation*, Kanter (1993) presents these rigid gender norms as 'role traps'. She argues that role traps – such as the mother, the pet or the seductress – are embraced by women in working roles as they 'offer[ed] a comfortable and certain position ... [and a] category the men could respond to and understand' (Kanter, 1993, pp. 392–3). For instance, and we discuss these further below, many women adopt the role of the mother, attending to the needs of men by being good listeners and the port of call for advice. In Butler's terms, we see Kanter's role traps as discursive formulations – they are attempts at doing gender in the workplace. In this sense, if Butler's theory provides us with a wardrobe of limited size through which to understand how people might perform gender, Kanter's role traps are the costumes that women are encouraged to adopt most regularly or which they are expected to wear. These costumes – shaped by cultural mediums – go towards the performance of gender and create the subject in particular ways.

In order to explore this phenomenon in practice, we will now investigate how

Disney's 'wardrobe' has evolved over time. We will explore the patterns of work it has produced and the repeated role traps that have been produced. An important first stage in this process is to explore the animations in detail to understand the types and patterns of women's work that exist.

METHODOLOGY

The list of Disney animations for the core part of the study was compiled by obtaining the Disney 'classic' feature-length animations that Disney itself has used to distinguish its best work (see Appendix 1 for the full list). These animations (all in DVD format) were watched and coded, pausing where necessary to record longer quotations of interest. The coding itself was divided into two sections. First, recognising the vast benefits of such an approach, a general content analysis was conducted on gender and representations of traditional and non-traditional work (Macnamara, 2005). Work was defined both traditionally – 'oriented towards producing goods and services for one's own use or for pay' (Reskin 2000, p. 3261) and non-traditionally – so to include house-work, unpaid or forced labour as well as other non-paid forms of work as distinct from leisure and play-time or time we take to relax and sleep. Gender was defined in the broadest extent, expanding the female to the feminine to include those times when as Lewis (2014, p. 1847) following Alvesson (1998) suggests 'women and men can successfully mobilize femininity when managing and doing business'. Similarly, animators develop and use what one might characterise as feminised male characters (*Dumbo*, *Pinocchio*) in working situations, which we took into account during the coding stage.

Second, a thematic analysis was conducted that explored issues relating to work within the animations (Boyatzis, 1998). In this part of the study, following previous

investigations into TV and film (Bowman, 2011; Panayiotou, 2010), there was a more specific coding of themes relating to work including violence at work, crying at work or manipulation at work. This set of themes was developed with 20 original thematic codes – reflecting themes that might be expected from previous viewing – but as the first five Disney animations revealed new areas of interest to pursue, additional codes were added (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). A full list of general and specific codes can be found in Appendix 2.

There are obvious differences and difficulties of coding moving images rather than interviews or ethnographic observations. One such issue is the interpretation of the person carrying out the coding in terms of what it is they have actually seen. With text, there is still room for interpretation, of course, but with images owing to the speed of change and nuance available, there is perhaps even more so. Often animations can have many different themes and interactions going on at once on screen, so it can appear like multiple texts and subtexts are ongoing and intertwining in complex and multi-faceted ways. It is important then as a researcher to remain even more reflexive about what it is that has been viewed and the ways that the film data is being coded. This is particularly the case once a dozen or so films have been viewed as these viewings may (unfairly) shape how future film scenes and interactions are viewed and interpreted.

In attempting to understand how female work is represented in Disney animations, it was then possible to use the notes and the codes produced to look for repeating patterns that exist within and between the animations. Czarniawska (2008, p. 165) explores the representations of women within finance in popular culture and does so by looking at 'established and repeated patterns of employment'. A five-stage sequence of work was derived from the analysis and related codes which involve: i) separation from parents (by way of codes such as

‘child labour’, ‘forced labour’); ii) subjection to dangerous, dirty or unfulfilling work (through ‘violence at work’, ‘death at work’, ‘boredom’ or being ‘scared/frightened in work’); iii) manipulation and deception by managers (by way of ‘manipulation/deception’, ‘domination’, ‘bullying’); iv) accentuating the positive at work (by way of the corresponding code); and v) being rescued and returned to a safe environment (by way of ‘quitting job’). We endorse this approach and have found clear signs that the *Disney* characterisation of female (or feminine) work is reflected and repeated in a five-stage pattern that appears within or across many of their animations.

THE DISNEY CHARACTERISATION OF WOMEN'S WORK

This section will now consider the five-stage sequence of work in some detail. It involves: i) separation from parents; ii) subjection to dangerous, dirty or unfulfilling work; iii) manipulation and deception by managers; iv) accentuating the positive or ‘whistling while you work’; and v) being rescued and returned to a safe environment.

Separation from Parent(s)

In the first stage of the Disney characterisation of work, individuals – usually children – are subjected to work due to their vulnerability – invariably through the death of (or separation from) one or both parents. Separation from parents is in itself an overriding theme in Disney animations appearing for main characters in no fewer than 34 of 53 of their ‘classic’ feature animations. We might immediately think of well-known animations like *Cinderella* (1950) and *Snow White* (1937) where a loving parent dies, leaving the child at the mercy of a wicked step-mother, or animations like *The Rescuers* (1977) in which a

secret agency is entirely devoted to saving orphaned children who are now being forced to work.

Indeed, separation from parents is a common story device found in fairy tales throughout the ages that allows the author to create a sphere of freedom in which the character can play out their crisis. It plays on the deep-seated psychological fears held by the child and parent about being separated from each other – of being un-attached in a disorganised and dis-orientating manner (Bowlby, 1988; Slough & Greenberg, 1990). In doing so, this device also enables a sphere of *vulnerability* through which the author or the animator can care for the character and help them to resolve this crisis. This is interesting insofar as the writer, the author, is invariably male and the main character left alone is invariably young and female or feminine (but not always, see Mowgli in *The Jungle Book* for instance). It suggests that producers of animations, such as Disney’s *Nine Old Men*, created (and provided the voices for) worlds in which they could paternalistically guide this character through an environment filled with danger. And this danger, according to a large number of these animations ($n = 27$) was no better represented than through the world of work that the character – now alone or otherwise uncared for – is subjected.

Subjection to Dangerous, Dirty or Unfulfilling Work

Second, the work that the character is subjected to is invariably characterised as violent, degrading and frightening, with numerous depictions of characters crying at work or subjected to abuse and domination in the workplace (Courpasson, 2000; Leflaive, 1996). Parker (2006, p. 2) evokes what he calls organisational gothic to remind us that:

[w]orkplaces are often imagined as places of repetitive violence. Bored bodies serving machines;

lowering mills and office blocks; rows of heads bent in sullen silence. Whether in Marx, Dickens, Weber, or Kafka, the image is one of repeated acts of indignity, leaving hidden injuries that last a life time.

No Disney animation better encapsulates this stage of the Disney perspective on work as *Pinocchio* (1940) in which the enslaved puppet – separated from his loving adopted father Geppetto – weeps as he is put to work and then caged by his boss Stromboli who declares ‘Pinocchio you will make lots of money for me, and when you are too old, you will make good fire wood’. It is also reflected in these early Disney animations where female work is either portrayed as forced labour (*Snow White*, *Dumbo*, *Cinderella*, *The Rescuers*) or as unskilled and unfulfilling labour as is the case in animations like *Lady and the Tramp* (1955) and the *Jungle Book* (1967). In the latter, Mowgli – an orphaned boy being raised by jungle animals – spies on a young village girl who fills jugs of water from the river. She sings to herself with a mix of resignation to unfulfilling work and contentment of her place in the order of things: ‘Father is hunting in the forest; mother is cooking in the home. I must go to fetch the water, until the day that I am grown ... Then I will have a handsome husband, and a daughter of my own. And I will send her to fetch the water; I’ll be cooking in the home’. This sense of either normalised monotonous work (Molstad, 1986) or dangerous and frightening work (Jermier et al., 2006) is ubiquitous in these early animations in particular and female work is portrayed in an almost universally negative fashion.

Manipulation and/or Deception by Managers or Overseers

Third, the work being experienced is usually controlled by duplicitous and manipulative individuals – often portrayed as managers or overseers of some description – that pretend to be caring and compassionate towards the

vulnerable but who, in reality, maintain the subjection of the individual both initially and over time (cf. Dutton et al., 2006; Frost et al., 2000). One of the ‘role traps’ (Kanter, 1993) in Disney animations that fulfil this purpose is that of the Queen Bee (Cooper, 1997; Mavin, 2006) – a dominant, aggressive female who will often block the progress of younger females in the process. For example, this is represented in the manipulative wicked stepmother in *Snow White* as the overseer of her dominion, doing all she can (at one stage disguising herself and poisoning her stepdaughter) to remain the prettiest in the land. This same role trap is repeated – or to use Butler’s term ‘imitated’ – in other early animations through characters such as Cinderella’s wicked stepmother (who manipulatively agrees to allow Cinderella to go to the ball if she completes all of her work, knowing this to be impossible), the female elephants (who bully and cast out young Dumbo from the circus act), the psychopathic Queen of Hearts in *Alice in Wonderland* (ordering her guards ‘off with her head’) and, perhaps most famously, Cruella De Vil in *101 Dalmatians* (1961) as the ‘boss’ in charge of her paid henchmen. The characteristics of this role trap are also captured perfectly by *The Rescuers*’ (1977) Queen Bee, Madame Medusa, who explains to her henchman how to manipulate a young girl into mining a rare diamond for her – ‘you must gain their confidence, make them like you’. It is this portrayal of powerful older female work as deceptive, manipulative and underhand that comes across strongly during this stage of Disney’s characterisation of work.

Another ‘role trap’, derived from Kanter’s (1993) study of female stereotypes in the workplace, employed in a similar manner, is that of the seductress – ‘a sexually active, dangerous figure of unclear competence’ (Martin, 1990, p. 349). In the early Disney animations, this is represented through the go-go dancers who flirt with Pinocchio on stage and through the ‘real’ (that is,

un-animated) singing woman and models in swimsuits that Donald Duck is drawn in by and tries to kiss in *The Three Caballeros* (1944). In a short segment of *Melody Time* (1948) there is also the first instance (in a Disney animation) of a female playing the role of what would usually be a male work role (a cowboy). Unfortunately, this is not the first feminist Disney moment. Cowboy Bill meets Sue, 'the first female cowboy Bill had ever seen', who he falls in love with, kisses and agrees to marry. Sue turns out to be very good on the horse which cannot buckaroo her, but eventually she bounces off ('due to her bustle'), and she bounces higher and higher until she goes up to the moon never to return. This somewhat bizarre and sexist portrayal of female work in early Disney animations gives way to modern seductresses in the form of Esmerelda in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996) – a young gypsy dancer who uses her looks to distract and manipulate men in her work – and Vanessa in *The Little Mermaid* (1989) whom Ursula – a wicked sea witch (a Queen Bee) who describes herself as the 'boss' – transforms into in order to manipulate and deceive the princess Ariel and her prince. In all of these instances we see Disney characterising female work in the form of a seductress who uses her sexuality to manipulate others and get her own way – an archetype that is persistent in the workplace even today to undermine the achievements of women (Baxter, 2012).

More generally, however, the theme of manipulation by managers or overseers is widespread, appearing in no fewer than 33 of the Disney animations, becoming even more common in recent times. Indeed, for a company that is often portrayed as the embodiment of American capitalism: 'Disney constructs childhood as to make it entirely compatible with consumerism' (Smooden cited in Giroux, 2004, p. 105), it is interesting to note a paradoxical running critique of capitalist manipulation and domination that exists in Disney's animations.

As well as the Queen Bee and seductress 'role traps', there are numerous other ways in which these animations portray the bosses as individuals who feign care and compassion to subjugate often unknowing workers to build their status and, in doing so, accumulate wealth (Learmonth & Humphreys, 2011 cf. Dutton et al., 2010). In *Pinocchio*, for example, we encounter various manipulative bosses. There is a theme throughout of male characters tricking the vulnerable (children) into situations where they can exploit them to make money as well as heavy connotations of other forms of exploitation (taking the young boys to 'pleasure island' but then turning them into donkeys and taking them down the mines). In doing so, many of these fairy stories have been couched in managerialist language by predominantly white, male, middle-aged authors and animators in a way that constructs young (usually female) crises through the lens of neo-liberal capitalism.

Accentuating the Positive in the Working Role

The fourth stage of the *Disney* characterisation of work involves the character (or the author) directly responding to this individual crisis. It is here that any potential for a sustained critique of capitalism gives way to conformity. Despite all of the dangers and negative experiences of work described, the characterisation of work suggests individuals should accentuate the positive in the workplace and bravely soldier on in the face of adversity and abuse (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). This theme appears in no fewer than 29 of the feature animations, and is perhaps most famously represented within *Snow White* in which she sings: 'Just whistle while you work, and cheerfully together we can tidy up the place. It won't take long when there's a song, to help you get the pay'. In many respects it is at this stage of work that we encounter the full force of the

role trap which Kanter (1993, p. 393) calls the 'pet' or 'younger sister', reflecting an 'amusing little thing' with 'good humour' about her place in the order of things. This is reflected in subsequent animations, for example, when Cinderella tells herself 'keep on believing and that dream you wish will come true' or in *The Rescuers* (1977) where a young girl in captivity and being subjected to forced labour is told 'faith is a bluebird you see from afar. It's for real and as sure as the first evening star. You can't touch it or buy it or wrap it up tight, but it's there just the same making things turn out right'. It is this blind attachment to the belief that things will turn out okay that is pervasive and imitated within the world of work throughout many of these animations (Rynes et al., 2012).

Being Rescued and Returned to a Non-Working Environment

Finally, the Disney characterisation of work suggests that if individuals persevere in exploitative situations, they will eventually be rescued by well-meaning and decent heroes who will save the day and ensure the individual is returned to a safer and happier environment (Fletcher, 2004). Often this has involved men (usually princes) saving women (usually pet-like in sensibility and from privileged backgrounds) from these situations, as is the case in early Disney animations such as *Snow White* (1937), *Cinderella* (1950) and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) and more recently in animations like *The Little Mermaid* (1989) and *Tangled* (2010). Numerous critical pieces have been written on the passivity of the Disney princess and her need to be saved or rescued by a man (Lieberman, 1972; Zipes, 1995).

However, another female working 'role trap' can be found here represented at this stage, helping to save those in crisis through the role of the 'mother' (Bowman, 2011).

According to Kanter (1993) this is a woman – in an organisational context – to whom men 'brought their private troubles, and she was expected to comfort them ... [reflecting] ... the assumption that women are sympathetic, good listeners and easy to talk to about one's problems'. The caring mother is represented in 22 of the Disney animations and is no better captured than in *Peter Pan* (1953) in which the children's mother, Mrs Darling, is portrayed as doting and loving and the father as angry and uncaring. When Peter asks Wendy to come to Neverland, she says 'what about mother?' to which Peter replies 'what's a mother?' Wendy explains that a mother 'loves you, takes care of you, reads to you stories' and adds later that she is 'the most wonderful person you could know'. The animation continuously returns to the idea that 'boys [and we are to assume girls] all need a mother' and how important she is for moral guidance and growing up correctly. The pirates are coaxed out of their working roles and blind loyalty to their boss – Captain Hook – and reduced to tears as they listen to Wendy sing about how a mother is 'the helping hand that guides you along whether you are right, whether you are wrong'.

It is easy to forget that these are not the words of Wendy at all but of Disney's 'Nine Old Men' (reflecting the sentiments of the original author J.M. Barrie) who were regularly using the role trap of the mother to resolve crises being experienced by one (or more) of the characters. Good examples of this within Disney animations include the fairy godmothers employed to care for and rescue the princesses in *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty* as well as the Blue Fairy, an aged and motherly character, who saves Pinocchio at various points when he finds himself in mortal danger. Snow White is perhaps the most interesting example of this archetype in early Disney as she is transformed throughout the animation from a pet or a younger sister figure into a motherly role. On finding the dwarfs' house, Snow

White assumes they are orphans because ‘a mother would never leave a house like this’. She naturally assumes the mantle of mother within the household from the outset despite having little known experience in this area, sending the dwarfs off to the mines with a kiss on the cheek, cleaning the house and cooking the dinner. She checks their hands on their return, as a mother might do, ordering them to wash them clean before they enjoy their food, chastising them ‘straight outside and wash or you’ll not get a bite to eat’. The dwarf, Grumpy, complains that ‘her [feminine] wiles are beginning to work, give them an inch and they will take a mile’ and ultimately leading him to state in frustration: ‘women, a fine kettle of fish!’

More generally, the theme of rescuing from unpleasant working experiences is particularly prevalent in Disney, either by mother figures, princes or by other means, appearing in 22 of the feature animations. Classics such as *Lady and the Tramp* (1955) and *The Aristocats* (1970) both follow a similar pattern of taking female animals (a dog – Lady – and a cat – Duchess – respectively) away from their pampered non-working, lifestyles with wealthy owners into a world of poverty and danger. Situations which require their male ‘rescuers’ to grift and use their street-wise skills to survive and return the females (and in Duchess’s case her young fatherless family) back to their homes, whilst in the process saving themselves from this somewhat difficult life as well. This characterisation of work has been repeated numerous times within animations and is particularly prevalent in cases where female or highly feminised characters are taking part in unpaid or forced labour.

The final stage of being rescued from these dire situations within the workplace acts as an end point and ‘happily ever after’ for characters within these movies in a way that disarms all of the previous problems. It often locates safety within the home for the characters either through marriage or other ways that ensure the abandonment

of traditional working roles. Parker (2006, p. 2) argues that ‘the assumption that work is boring and degrading, and that escaping from it can be fun, reflects a wider culture that simultaneously celebrates and denigrates management and organization’. In this vein Disney – and the contradictions found within the Disney stages of work – can be seen as part of a Western culture which celebrates management and organisation, whilst at the same time denigrating it. A fascinating mix of ideas that contributes towards organisational readiness, preparing us for (and warning us about) a capitalist system that relies upon orderly organisational life. In the next section, we will now seek to understand the patterned and sequential view of work described in the first section and understand how this repetitive act of imitation seeks to reinforce a particular way of understanding gendered work. To do so, we consider the ways that modern Disney animations have begun to engage with this sequence directly, citing previous performances of gendered work.

CONTEMPORARY DISNEY ANIMATIONS AND WORK

Disney has reacted to pressure in recent years and has started to widen their own ‘wardrobe’ to include new performances of gender that consciously reference what has (and what has not) gone before. For instance, in recent animations they have portrayed a cross-dressing Asian soldier girl (*Mulan* [1998]), an African-American waitress (Tiana, *The Princess and the Frog* [2009]) and a scientist girl (Jane, *Tarzan* [1999]) all of which have been praised for their somewhat different portrayals of femininity (Lester, 2010; Towbin et al., 2004). There must, of course, be a healthy degree of scepticism regarding the reasons for this, particularly as Disney CEO Michael Eisner is on

record as saying: 'We have no obligation to make history. We have no obligation to make art. We have no obligation to make a statement. To make money is our only objective'.

Nevertheless, it is important also to keep in mind that there is a new generation of artists (writers and directors) involved in the production of these animations who are committed to producing characters that they are comfortable with and proud of. The proportion of women working directly in the writing and directing of animations has also increased since the late 1990s. It will be interesting, therefore, to consider how all of these forces have influenced the five-stage sequence of work in different ways. It is here that Butler's notion of citationality offers a helpful lens to study this issue – that is, to consider how the imitations of previous performances of gender are referenced and in doing so illuminate how the performances have shifted over time. Animation is particularly adept at citationality and of referencing back to former performances, with pioneering shows like *The Simpsons* (1987) referencing all sorts of obscure influences in their work (Groening, 2010; Singh, 2014).

In the more recent Disney productions it is clear that imitation has been sustained but has shifted in terms of how the animations (and the authors or animators) consciously referenced back to previous performances of gender and work. So, in the first instance, we still see the common story device of separation from parents (or a parent) to create a sphere of vulnerability. For example, recent animations such as *Frozen* (2013) and *The Princess and the Frog* (2009) both contain the tragic deaths of parents, none of which are in the fairy tales (or adaptations) that initially inspired the animations. *Frozen* becomes a coming-of-age love-story between two young sisters who – due to the death of their king and queen parents – suddenly have the working responsibility (and associated anxieties) of managing a whole kingdom. One of the sisters, Elsa, has the power to produce snow and ice, but struggles

to control it leading to anxieties that reflect her fears about becoming queen of her kingdom. Jennifer Lee, writer and director of *Frozen*, explains: 'I love Cinderella ... but am I anything like her? No, I grew up and became someone more independent. Elsa and Anna are princesses because they've got the weight of a kingdom on their shoulders not as the solution to a happy ending' (cited in Applebaum, 2014). *The Princess and the Frog*, meanwhile, becomes an animation in which an African-American girl – Tiana – works two menial jobs in New Orleans in an effort to buy her own restaurant, whilst being constantly told she will never succeed. In adopting these narratives, the second stage of work – subjection to frightening or monotonous labour – is integrated into the animations so that the theme is carried on in rather interesting ways that consciously interact with and cite what has gone before.

The third stage – manipulative and deceptive bosses – is just as strong in recent Disney animations. In *The Princess and the Frog*, this feature is represented through the lawyers who disappoint Tiana and accept a rival's cash bid on the premises for the restaurant she wishes to purchase. She is told this is 'why a little woman of your background would have had her hands full running a big business like that ... now you're better off where you are at'. *Frozen*, meanwhile, has numerous manipulative characters including the capitalist trader the Duke of Weselton (mis-pronounced as Weasel town, much to his annoyance) who arrives in the kingdom on learning about the vulnerable princesses. He proclaims that he is excited about the prospect of 'unlocking [the kingdom's/the princesses's] secrets and exploiting its riches [to which he adds] – did I just say that out loud?' And this is by no means the exception – within the 32 animations with scenes of managerial manipulation, bosses are described as 'vampires' (*Lilo & Stitch*, 2002) and 'fat cats' (*The Princess and the Frog*, 2009), embarking on 'hostile take overs' (*Hercules*, 1997) and requiring 'witless

peasants to dig up my gold' (*Pocahontas*, 1995). In doing so, many of these fairy stories have been couched in managerialist language by predominantly white, male, middle-aged authors and animators in a way that continues to construct young female crises through the lens of neo-liberal capitalism (for a full summary of the gender imbalance in the animation teams on Disney films, see Appendix 1).

The fourth stage of work – accentuating the positive – is imitated in the recent animations in various interesting ways as well. In *Meet the Robinsons* (2007), the motto of the lead character's (Lewis's) invention company is 'keep moving forward'. At the end of the movie a Walt Disney quote is displayed: 'Around here, however we don't look backwards for very long. We keep moving forward, opening up new doors and doing new things ... and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths'. This quote captures the Disney attitude to work, and acts as a citation that references an idealised attitude to work on and off screen at the Disney Corporation. In *The Princess and the Frog*, there are elements of accentuating the positive but a new direction or twist on the imitation also takes place. In a flashback to her father, before his death in the war, he says: 'you wish and you dream with all your little heart but you remember Tiana that old star can only take you part of the way. You gotta help it along with some hard work of your own and then you can do anything you set your mind to'. The reference to the 'star' is clearly a citation from *Pinocchio* – of Jiminy Cricket singing 'when you wish upon a star' – but with the added element of individual hard work to achieve one's dreams. In this sense, Tiana inherits a 'capitalist spirit' and meritocratic attitude from her father and in the song *Almost There* proclaims:

I remember Daddy told me 'fairy tales can come true you gotta make 'em happen, it all depends on you'. So I worked real hard each and every day. Now things for sure are going my way. Just doing what I do, look out boys I'm coming through. And I'm almost there, I'm almost there.

In *Frozen*, meanwhile, accentuating the positive is no better reflected than in Elsa's reaction to her inability to control her new powers (as queen and sorceress) and the dangerous implications it has for those around her. Having escaped the kingdom following her coronation (and her inadvertent creation of a perpetual winter), in '*Let It Go*', she sings in isolation:

[i]t's funny how some distance can make everything seem small, and the fears that once controlled me, can't get to me at all. It's time to see what I can do, to test the limits and break through. No right, no wrong, no rules for me. I'm free!

During this scene Elsa not only gives up on trying to be a 'good girl' (and on her responsibilities of work) – accentuating the positive about her dangerous powers – but also begins to physically make a transition before the viewer's eyes from a relatively plainly dressed girl into a glamorous woman. One of the few criticisms of the animation has been the way that during this song Elsa unveils a new costume (from the Disney 'wardrobe') with a new hair style and an attitude to match. One critic, who otherwise 'love[d]' the animation, declares a sense of deflation that *Let it Go*:

[c]ulminates in a vision of female self-actualization as narrow and horizon-diminishing as a makeover. It's a moment I recognize from too many movies in my own childhood – *Grease* was one, *The Breakfast Club*, another – in which the 'good girl' goes over to 'the bad side' thanks to a quick cosmetic fix-up ... These moments always bugged me as a kid, because they seemed to be last-minute reversals of the foregoing movie's message, which was that the character in question ... was fine just the way she was. (Stevens, 2014)

It is this transformation by Elsa into what might ordinarily be considered a Disney princess – she looks not too dissimilar to Cinderella, if she were a seductress – that reflects an updated imitation, a citation of previous performances of gendered work.

Finally, for the fifth stage of Disney's characterisation of work, there is a clear

reaction to the notion that the lead character – usually female or feminine – needs to be rescued from work. *Frozen*'s interaction with this stage is interesting insofar as Elsa is saved from danger not by the love of a prince, but of her sister. Moreover, she is saved from her situation – her anxieties about managing her kingdom – but is not delivered away from them but confronts them head-on with her sister by her side. There is a similar situation in *The Princess and the Frog*, to the extent that a wise voodoo priestess and mother role-type, Mama Odie, guides Tiana and the prince Naveen – both bewitched and turned into frogs – to realise that love is more important than material gain. This ends up setting them both free from the spell and to a situation where Tiana marries the prince but also achieves her dream of owning and opening her own restaurant. In this sense, whilst previous 'rescuers' such as the prince and the mother are imitated in these more recent animations, there is a clear integration of self-determination and independence for the female work being portrayed. The message shifts towards the idea that love (whether from a sister, a mother, a prince or a friend) is the most important supporting influence as we try to achieve (and become comfortable within) a working role that we aspire to, or find ourselves expected to fulfil.

It is through a crisis of work (or their capacity to achieve fulfilling work), therefore, that these characters (helped by various people) begin to understand more about themselves and to construct a more stable identity around this. Another recent Disney animation, *Wreck-It Ralph* (2012), similarly reflects this shift in attitude towards gendered work. Set in the video game world of an arcade, the animation follows Ralph and Vanellope who both find themselves unhappy with the working roles that they have been given within their games. In the final section of the animation Vanellope learns that she has been tricked and should in fact be the lead racer and princess of her own video game.

Vanellope – a feisty, independent character – is transformed into a princess with a stereotypical dress and pretends for a minute to act like a princess, changing her voice and mannerisms, closer to that of Cinderella or Snow White. This playful citation by Disney is then revealed to be a ruse as she rejects her new princess outfit 'Oh Ralph, what are you nuts? This isn't me! [she spins around out of her gown and into her normal clothes] This is me! The code may say I'm a princess but I know what I really am, I'm a racer with the greatest super power ever'. In this sense, Vanellope is helped – this time through platonic friendship and love – to achieve a stable working identity in the same way Tiana, Anna and Elsa are, as they all struggle to find their own ways in the world. She breaks free from a role trap and, like Elsa, the resolution of the crisis comes hand in hand with a wardrobe change – albeit temporary in this case. The female crisis being experienced is still framed through the lens of neo-liberal capitalism, but there are more options available to help them through this process than early Disney animations. Moreover, the eventual outcome is not usually escaping work but finding a way of working that is fulfilling and which appears to reflect who they really are inside.

CONCLUSION

There is a complicated relationship between culture and capitalism. In their discussion of the mass marketisation of – and capitalist critique found within – *The Simpsons*, Rhodes and Parker (2008, p. 628) note that 'culture and commerce collide and interperse in a symbolic connection and reversal that upsets any monolithic meaning of the values associated with the ethics of managerialism'. Disney reflects this complicated relationship extremely well, providing a consistent critique of managerial and capitalist practice whilst offering (and later

challenging) a vision of female work that is caught up within a maelstrom caused by neo-liberalism. Lewis (2014, p. 3) in describing Acker's (1990) 'transformative' approach to understanding gender in organisations, explains how 'a masculine norm is literally "built into" management and aspects of organization, requiring an individual to enact a masculine identity if she is to be deemed to be abiding by organizational requirements or doing a management job properly'. In many respects, Disney reinforced this message through the five-stage sequence of work that is repeated across their earlier animations, suggesting that females (or feminine characters) will need rescuing from this dangerous world of work.

And yet, exploring Disney's five-stage characterisation of work through Butler's gender theories has enabled us to demonstrate clear opportunities for resistance in Disney, as authors and animators have unconsciously and more recently consciously played with our knowledge of previous performances of feminine work. In doing so, they work on different levels to help children and adults see the ways in which gender norms can be destabilised through radical interpretations and performances which have the potential to blur the lines of gender and illuminate bias and discrimination. As Butler (1990, p. 148) suggests, 'the task is not whether to repeat, but *how* to repeat, or, indeed to repeat and, through a radical proliferation of gender, to displace the very gender norms that enable the repetition itself'. In her reading of Butler, Salih (2006, p. 58) points out that this is problematic as Butler has already asserted that the subject is trapped within a discourse which determines how she acts. However, if we think about these sorts of radical acts as opening up a space (or a wider space) of experimentation, it might begin to destabilise gender norms in an interesting way – a

way that contributes to Butler's desire for a more emancipatory politics (Butler, 2004).

Animations offer society a hugely influential opportunity to conduct these sorts of experiments with gender in a way that influences children in significant ways. As Giroux argues, 'this isn't just about entertainment, it's about education. We have to take pop culture seriously and put it into our curriculums ... Students have to learn to read culture. We're not just dealing with friendly Walt'. In this sense, reflecting on Disney's characterisation of work and the ways that women find roles and role traps within this process is an effective tool for helping young girls and boys to think critically about gender and organisations. Indeed, a recent report by the American Academy of Pediatrics (2013, p. 958) suggests that 'young people now spend more time with media than they do in school – it is the leading activity for children and teenagers other than sleeping'. We consider it essential therefore that students and academics alike develop methods for studying fiction portrayed within films that utilise our capacities to 'read' culture more critically.

If, as Disney himself said, 'movies can and do have tremendous influence in shaping young lives in the realm of entertainment towards the ideals and objectives of normal adulthood', this task is as essential as ever. Not only in becoming more aware of the assumptions and expectations built into films about things such as work and organisational life, but in deconstructing notions like 'normal adulthood'. If fiction – inspired by powerful and wealthy individuals and corporations like Disney – is shaping how young girls and children more generally view how they should act within wider society, reading culture and fiction within films reflexively becomes an essential capacity that should undoubtedly be developed within school children throughout their education.

APPENDIX 1 – LIST OF FILMS ANALYSED AND COMPOSITION OF WRITER/DIRECTOR TEAMS

Table 10.1

Year	Studio and film		Gender list			
	Walt Disney		Adaptive writers	Original writers	Total male	Notes on female contribution
	Film	Directors				
1937	<i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i>	6 of 6	7 of 8	2 of 2	15 of 16	Dorothy Ann Blank (story adaptation)
1940	<i>Pinocchio</i>	7 of 7	7 of 7	1 of 1	15 of 15	
1940	<i>Fantasia</i>	11 of 11	23 of 25	n/a	34 of 36	Sylvia Moberly-Holland/Bianca Majolie
1941	<i>Dumbo</i>	7 of 7	8 of 8	1 of 2	16 of 17	Helen Aberson co-wrote the original book
1942	<i>Bambi</i>	7 of 7	7 of 7	1 of 1	15 of 15	
1943	<i>Saludos Amigos</i>	4 of 4	9 of 9	n/a	13 of 13	
1944	<i>The Three Caballeros</i>	5 of 5	13 of 13	n/a	18 of 18	
1946	<i>Make Mine Music</i>	5 of 5	15 of 16	n/a	20 of 21	Sylvia Moberly-Holland (story)
1947	<i>Fun and Fancy Free</i>	n/a	6 of 6	1 of 1	7 of 7	
1948	<i>Melody Time</i>	4 of 4	12 of 12	1 of 1	17 of 17	
1949	<i>Ichabod and Mr Toad</i>	3 of 3	6 of 6	3 of 3	12 of 12	
1950	<i>Cinderella</i>	3 of 3	8 of 8	1 of 1	12 of 12	
1951	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i>	3 of 3	14 of 14	1 of 1	18 of 18	
1953	<i>Peter Pan</i>	4 of 4	8 of 8	1 of 1	13 of 13	
1955	<i>Lady and the Tramp</i>	3 of 3	7 of 7	1 of 1	11 of 11	
1959	<i>Sleeping Beauty</i>	1 of 1	7 of 7	1 of 1	9 of 9	
1961	<i>101 Dalmatians</i>	3 of 3	1 of 1	0 of 1	4 of 5	Dodie Smith wrote the original novel
1963	<i>The Sword in the Stone</i>	1 of 1	1 of 1	1 of 1	3 of 3	
1967	<i>The Jungle Book</i>	1 of 1	4 of 4	1 of 1	6 of 6	
1970	<i>The Aristocats</i>	1 of 1	7 of 7	2 of 2	10 of 10	
1973	<i>Robin Hood</i>	1 of 1	8 of 8	n/a	9 of 9	
1977	<i>M.A. of Winnie the Pooh</i>	2 of 2	9 of 9	1 of 1	12 of 12	
1977	<i>The Rescuers</i>	3 of 3	9 of 9	0 of 1	12 of 13	Margery Sharp wrote the original novel
1981	<i>The Fox and the Hound</i>	3 of 3	8 of 8	1 of 1	12 of 12	
1985	<i>The Black Cauldron</i>	2 of 2	17 of 18	1 of 1	20 of 21	Rosemary Anne Sisson (additional dialogue)
1986	<i>The Great Mouse Detective</i>	4 of 4	10 of 10	1 of 2	15 of 16	Eve Titus wrote the original book
1988	<i>Oliver & Company</i>	1 of 1	21 of 21	2 of 2	24 of 24	
1989	<i>The Little Mermaid</i>	2 of 2	6 of 6	1 of 1	9 of 9	
1990	<i>The Rescuers Down Under</i>	2 of 2	4 of 4	0 of 1	6 of 7	Margery Sharp wrote the original novel
1991	<i>Beauty and the Beast</i>	2 of 2	9 of 11	0 of 1	11 of 14	Linda Woolverton (screenplay), Brenda Chapman (story) and the original novel is by Jeanne-Marie Le Prince de Beaumont

(Continued)

Table 10.1 (Continued)

Year	Studio and film		Gender list			
	Walt Disney		Adaptive writers	Original writers	Total male	Notes on female contribution
	Film	Directors				
1992	<i>Aladdin</i>	2 of 2	18 of 20	1 of 1	21 of 23	Sue Nichols and Rebecca Rees (story)
1994	<i>The Lion King</i>	2 of 2	22 of 28	n/a	24 of 30	Linda Woolverton and Irene Mecchi (screenplay), Brenda Chapman (story supervisor), Lorna Cook (story), Jenny Tripp and Noni White (additional story)
1995	<i>Pocahontas</i>	2 of 2	26 of 27	1 of 1	29 of 30	Susannah Grant (written by)
1996	<i>The Hunchback of Notre Dame</i>	2 of 2	4 of 6	1 of 1	7 of 9	Irene Mecchi and Noni White (screenplay)
1997	<i>Hercules</i>	2 of 2	15 of 18	n/a	17 of 20	Irene Mecchi (screenplay), Kelly Wightman and Tamara Lusher-Stocker (story)
1998	<i>Mulan</i>	2 of 2	25 of 30	1 of 1	28 of 33	Rita Hsiao and Eugenia Bostwick-Singer (screenplay), Lorna Cook (story), Linda Woolverton and Jodi Ann Johnson (additional story)
1999	<i>Tarzan</i>	2 of 2	21 of 24	1 of 1	24 of 27	Noni White (screenplay), Carole Holliday and Kelly Wightman (story)
1999	<i>Fantasia 2000</i>	8 of 8	8 of 11	n/a	16 of 19	Brenda Chapman (story), Elena Driskell (concept for a segment), Irene Mecchi (host sequences)
2000	<i>Dinosaur</i>	2 of 2	10 of 12	n/a	12 of 14	Shirley Pierce and Tamara Lusher (additional story)
2000	<i>Emperor's New Groove</i>	1 of 1	10 of 10	n/a	11 of 11	
2001	<i>Atlantis</i>	2 of 2	7 of 7	1 of 1	10 of 10	
2002	<i>Lilo & Stitch</i>	2 of 2	2 of 2	n/a	4 of 4	
2002	<i>Treasure Planet</i>	2 of 2	7 of 7	1 of 1	10 of 10	
2003	<i>Brother Bear</i>	2 of 2	26 of 26	n/a	28 of 28	
2004	<i>Home on the Range</i>	2 of 2	19 of 19	n/a	21 of 21	
2005	<i>Chicken Little</i>	1 of 1	8 of 11	n/a	9 of 12	Sara Parriott and Josann McGibbon (additional screenplay material), Sandra Tsing Loh (additional dialogue)
2007	<i>Meet the Robinsons</i>	1 of 1	9 of 11	n/a	10 of 12	Michelle Bochner (screenplay), Shirley Pierce (additional story material)
2008	<i>Bolt</i>	2 of 2	4 of 4	n/a	6 of 6	
2009	<i>The Princess and the Frog</i>	2 of 2	13 of 13	0 of 1	15 of 16	E.D. Baker wrote the original book
2010	<i>Tangled</i>	2 of 2	2 of 2	2 of 2	6 of 6	
2011	<i>Winnie the Pooh</i>	2 of 2	7 of 10	2 of 2	11 of 14	Clio Change (story), Kendelle Hoyer (story), Nicole Mitchell (story)
2012	<i>Wreck-It Ralph</i>	1 of 1	7 of 8	n/a	8 of 9	Jennifer Lee (screenplay)
2013	<i>Frozen</i>	1 of 2	3 of 4	1 of 1	5 of 7	Jennifer Lee (screenplay) and (Director)
Total		148 of 149	542 of 588	38 of 45	728 of 782	
		99.33%	92.18%	84.44%	93.1%	

APPENDIX 2 – GENERAL CODING THEMES

- 1 Number of characterisations of traditionally defined work
- 2 Gender of individual(s) characterised in traditional work
 - Male
 - Female
 - Undefined
- 3 Type of traditionally defined work
 - Routine manual (labourer, cleaner, field picker)
 - Man
 - Woman
 - Undefined
 - Skilled manual (a tradesperson – plumber, carpenter, builder)
 - Man
 - Woman
 - Undefined
 - Professional worker (doctor, lawyer, etc.)
 - Man
 - Woman
 - Undefined
 - Business owner/manager
 - Man
 - Woman
 - Undefined
 - Sales/shopkeeper/vendor/seller of goods
 - Man
 - Woman
 - Undefined
 - Armed forces/warrior/protector/assassin
 - Man
 - Woman
 - Undefined
- 4 Characterisations of non-traditional work
 - Childcare
 - Man
 - Woman
 - Undefined
 - House (or garden) work
 - Man
 - Woman
 - Undefined
 - Royalty
 - Man
 - Woman
 - Undefined

- Slave/forced labour
 - Man
 - Woman
 - Undefined
- Show business/celebrity/actor/actress
 - Man
 - Woman
 - Undefined
- Sportsperson
 - Man
 - Woman
 - Undefined
- Wizard/witch/magical person
 - Man
 - Woman
 - Undefined
- Criminal/outlaw/thief
 - Man
 - Woman
 - Undefined

Specific themes – marked as M and F to denote gender involved in each characterisation

- Apprenticeship
- Forced/slave labour
- Crying at work
- Pay discussed/identified
- Working in teams
- Laughing at/enjoying work
- Violence in work
- Manipulation/deception
- Complimenting others' work
- Concern over fellow workers
- Humour in work tasks/role
- Romanced pursued in/through work
- Appearance changed for job
- Doppelganger effect
- Death in job
- Training/skills development
- Profiteering/capitalist spirit
- Changing jobs discussed
- Child labour
- Boredom
- Illness at work, mental or physical
- Scared/frightened at work
- Domination
- Accentuating the positive
- Moral guidance
- Quitting job
- Workplace bullying

REFERENCES

- Acker J (1990) Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organizations. *Gender and Society*, 4(2): 139–58.
- Alvesson M (1998) Gender relations and identity at work: A case study of masculinities and femininities in an advertising agency. *Human Relations*, 51(8): 969–1006.
- American Academy of Pediatrics (2013) Children, adolescents and the media. *Pediatrics*, 132(5): 958–61.
- Applebaum B (2014) Disney's *Frozen*: The power of princess merchandising. *The Independent*, 2 December 2014, available at www.independent.co.uk/news/business/analysis-and-features/disneys-frozen-the-power-of-princess-merchandising-9899016.html
- Appleyard, JA (1991) *Becoming a Reader: The Experience of Fiction from Childhood to Adulthood*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Baxter J (2012) Women of the corporation: A sociolinguistic perspective of senior women's leadership language in the UK. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 16(1): 81–107.
- Bowlby J (1988) *A Secure Base: Clinical Applications of Attachment Theory*. London: Routledge.
- Bowman SL (2011) The dichotomy of the Great Mother archetype in Disney heroines and villainesses. In Heit J (ed.) *Vader, Voldemort and Other Villains: Essays on Evil in Popular Media*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, pp. 80–96.
- Boyatzis RE (1998) *Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis and Code Development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Butler J (1988) Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory. *Theatre Journal*, 40(4): 519–531.
- Butler J (1990) *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler J (1992) The body you want: Liz Kotz interviews Judith Butler. *Artforum*, 31(3): 82–9.
- Butler J (1993) *Bodies That Matter*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler J (2004) *Precarious Lives*. London: Verso.
- Cooper VW (1997) Homophily or the Queen Bee syndrome: Female evaluation of female leadership. *Small Group Research*, 28(4): 483–99.
- Courpasson D (2000) Managerial strategies of domination. Power in soft bureaucracies. *Organization Studies*, 21(1): 141–61.
- Coyne SM, Linder JR, Rasmussen EE, Nelson DA and Birkbeck, V (2016). Pretty as a Princess: Longitudinal effects of engagement with Disney princesses on gender stereotypes, body esteem, and prosocial behavior in children. *Child Development*, In press. doi:10.1111/cdev.12569.
- Cummins J (1995) Romancing the plot: The real beast in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*. *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 20(1): 22–8.
- Czarniawska B (2008) Femme fatales in finance or women in the city. *Organization*, 15(2): 165–86.
- Dutton J, Roberts LM and Bednar J (2010) Pathways for positive identity construction at work: Four types of positive identity and social resources. *Academy of Management Review*, 35(2): 265–93.
- Dutton JE, Worline MC, Frost PJ and Lilius J (2006) Explaining compassion organizing. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 51(1): 59–96.
- Eisenstein S (1942) *The Film Sense*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co.
- Eisenstein S (1949) *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co.
- Fereday J and Muir-Cochrane E (2006) Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1): 1–11.
- Fletcher JK (2004) The paradox of post-heroic leadership: An essay on gender, power and transformational change. *Leadership Quarterly*, 15(5): 647–61.
- Foucault M (1984) Des espaces autre [Of other spaces]. *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité*, 5: 46–9.
- Frost PJ, Dutton JE, Worline MC and Wilson A (2000) Narratives of compassion in organizations. In Fineman S (ed.) *Emotions in Organizations*. London: Sage, pp. 25–45.
- Giroux H (2004) Are Disney movies good for your kids? In Steinberg SR and Kincheloe JL (eds.) *Kinderculture: The Corporate Construction of Childhood*. Cambridge, MA: Westview Press, pp. 164–80.
- Groening M (2010) *Simpsons World: The Ultimate Episode Guide Seasons 1–20*. New York: Harper.

- Jermier JM, Gaines J and McIntosh NJ (2006) Reactions to physically dangerous work: A conceptual and empirical analysis. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 10(1): 15–33.
- Kanter RM (1993) *Men and Women of the Corporation*. New York: Basic Books.
- Learmonth M and Humphreys M (2011) Blind spots in Dutton, Roberts and Bednar's 'Pathways for positive identity construction at work': 'You've got to accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative'. *Academy of Management Review*, 36(2): 424–7.
- Lester NA (2010) Disney's *The Princess and the Frog*: The pride, the pressure and the politics of being a first. *The Journal of American Culture*, 33(4): 294–308.
- Lewis P (2014) Post-feminism, femininities and organization studies: Exploring a new agenda. *Organization Studies*, 35(12): 1845–66.
- Lieberman MR (1972) 'Some day my prince will come': Female acculturation through the fairy tale. *College English*, 34(3): 383–95.
- Luthans F and Youssef CM (2007) Emerging positive organizational behavior. *Journal of Management*, 33(3): 321–49.
- Macnamara J (2005) Media content analysis: Its uses, benefits and best practice methodology. *Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal*, 6(1): 1–34.
- Martin J (1990) Deconstructing organizational taboos: The suppression of gender conflict in organizations. *Organization Science*, 1(4): 339–359.
- Mavin S (2006) Venus envy 2: Sisterhood, queen bees and female misogyny in management. *Women in Management Review*, 21(5): 349–64.
- Molstad C (1986) Choosing and coping with boring work. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 15(2): 215–36.
- Orenstein P (2014) *Cinderella Ate My Daughter: Dispatches from the Front Lines of Girlie-Girl Culture*. New York: Harper.
- Panayiotou A (2010) 'Macho' managers and organizational heroes: Competing masculinities in popular films. *Organization*, 17(6): 659–83.
- Parker M (2006) The counter-culture of organization: Towards cultural studies of the representation of work. *Consumption, Markets and Culture*, 9(1): 1–16.
- Reskin BF (2000) Work and occupations. In Borgatta EF and Montgomery RJV (eds.) *Encyclopedia of Sociology*. New York, Macmillan Reference USA: 3261–69.
- Rhodes C and Parker M (2008) Images of organizing in popular culture. *Organization*, 15(5): 627–38.
- Russell WB and Waters S (2010). Character education films for the elementary classroom. In *Reel Character Education: A Cinematic Approach to Character Development*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, pp. 37–81.
- Rynes SL, Bartunek JM, Dutton JE and Margolis JD (2012) Care and compassion through and organizational lens: Opening up new opportunities. *Academy of Management Review*, 37(4): 503–23.
- Salih S (2006) On Judith Butler and performativity. In Lovaas K and Jenkins M (eds.) *Sexualities and Communications in Everyday Life: A Reader*. London: Sage, pp. 55–68.
- Singh S (2014) *The Simpsons and their Mathematical Secrets*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Slough NM and Greenberg MT (1990) Five year olds' representations of separation from parents: Responses from the perspective of self and other. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 1990(48): 67–84.
- Stevens D (2014) I can't 'Let It Go'. *Slate*, 14 February 2014, available at www.slate.com/articles/arts/movies/2014/02/_let_it_go_idina_menzel_s_frozen_ballad_it_sends_the_wrong_message.html
- Towbin MA, Haddock SA, Zimmerman TS, Lund LK and Tanner LR (2004) Images of gender, race, age and sexual orientation in Disney feature-length animated films. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy*, 15(4): 19–44.
- Zipes J (1995) Breaking the Disney spell. In Bell E, Haas L and L Sells (eds.) *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender and Culture*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, pp. 21–42.

Dramaturgical Methods

Peter Birch

INTRODUCTION

The chapter considers how the practice and language of theatre provide a basis for an array of qualitative research methods, drawing upon the qualitative nature of the relationship between life and theatre. Rather than offering direct instruction about the use of dramaturgical methods, the chapter introduces a new organizing framework for such methods, showing how different dramaturgical methods may be situated within this framework. In consequence, it should be easier to test assumptions about the relationship between life and theatre and to consider the impact such assumptions have on the selection and design of dramaturgical methods. Examples of dramaturgical methods are discussed and situated within this new framework.

Common definitions of dramaturgy refer to the art and techniques of theatre, especially the writing of plays. Hence the word dramaturgical implies language and action

that derive from the art of theatre. A number of questions are begged from this definition, including what constitutes the art of theatre, what is dramaturgical writing and how might we understand these in the context of management and business research and research methodology? A full discussion of the first two questions is beyond the scope of this chapter, although it is necessary to give a view here as to what is meant by theatre as a frame of reference and the discussion begins by briefly considering the nature of theatre. In response to the second question, dramaturgical writing may be considered not only as the written word but also as improvisation and arguably as social ‘scripts’ that are constructed through social interaction. The third question entails a discussion of how dramaturgical concepts have been used methodologically within a business and organizational context. Such a discussion is somewhat problematic in that first, whilst there is a growing literature about the use of dramaturgical and theatre-based techniques

within the field of organizational learning and development, there is less attention given to the use of dramaturgical methods in management research. Second, there appears to be no organizing structure or framework whereby different dramaturgical methods may be compared in terms of their use and application. This chapter seeks to address this issue by offering such a framework.

The framework draws upon two different strands of writing in the organizational literature. The first is about the nature of theatre in performance, or in action, particularly noting the reciprocal triadic relationship between actor (or performer), performance and audience. The second strand is about how theatre provides us with a qualitative perspective on 'life', that is to say, on social interaction. In attempting to interweave these two strands, the chapter looks at the organizational literature for variance in how writers regard the metaphorical association between life and theatre.

This variance in the literature about theatre in the context of business and organizations arguably inhabits five dramaturgical perspectives: *life is like* theatre, *life is modelled* by theatre, *life is revealed* by theatre, *life and theatre are interdependent*, and lastly, *life is* theatre. The chapter briefly introduces each of these five perspectives in order to show how they might influence qualitative methodology. The five perspectives are then cross linked with the triadic view of the nature of theatre in order to produce an organizing framework for dramaturgical methods. A number of dramaturgical methods are then introduced and related to the framework to show how they differ in approach and application. More details about particular methods may be found by referring to the individual studies discussed. The new organizing framework is populated with the different methods that have been introduced. The chapter concludes by briefly discussing advantages and disadvantages of dramaturgical methods with a note about future directions.

THE NATURE OF THEATRE

A common understanding of the nature of theatre comes from Hamlet's advice to the players in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Act III, Scene 2, that the purpose of playing (acting) is to hold 'the mirror up to nature' and this seems self-evident and intuitively correct. The Hamlet quote continues: 'the purpose of playing is to hold the mirror up to nature: to show virtue her feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure'. Thus Shakespeare sees theatre as a means of showing not only the full panoply of human nature but also the way human nature is displayed within the political, economic and social conditions of the time in which the audience lives. This gives a hint as to why theatre might be a useful qualitative vehicle for an exploration of social interaction in a business context.

Yet theatre is not just about mirroring the mundane reality of social interaction. Theatre is regarded as an art form that expresses more than words can convey (Meisiek & Barry, 2010; Taylor & Ladkin, 2009), that it enables 'the transformation of ritual action into theatrical awareness' (Mangham & Overington, 1987, p. 50). Theatrical awareness entails a willingness to accept the reality of what is presented before us on stage or on screen (a suspension of disbelief), *because* it is in the context of theatre and because we expect to see and hear something 'more' than the mere mirroring of mundane reality. Cole (1975) argues that theatre enables imaginary truth to have a physical presence. For example, when Oberon, the king of the fairies in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* tells us 'I am invisible' whilst continuing to be present before us in the flesh, we in the audience accept his invisibility and therefore that other characters on stage cannot see him. Thus theatre is not only a 'mirror up to nature' it also embodies an exploration of the imagination. In a sense, theatre enables an unhinging of our expectations about what can be given physical presence in our mundane

social reality, and hence enables an imaginative exploration of our own human nature.

For instance, Boal (1995) talks of actors in theatre as exploring their souls, which in effect is the mirroring and enabling of the audiences' own explorations at this profound level. Yet, for the most part, the actors' explorations are interpretations of dramaturgical texts that have been given them to enact. However, nothing of what the script says and nothing of what the actors do to reveal those scripts has any significance if the audience cannot sense how the physical action witnessed in theatre reflects their own experience, or informs and enables their own exploration. Novitz (2002) points out that theatre has actual lived experience rather than artistic invention as its source, and in the theatre audiences are alert to the extent to which theatre is truly reflective of their actual and imaginary experience.

The audience is also physically present to the actors and as Ian Mangham notes, adept performers remain acutely aware of the response of their audiences and refine their interpretations to those responses (Mangham, 1990). Thus for Mangham the total theatre performance entails a reflexive, triadic reciprocity between actor (performer), script and audience (Mangham, 1990, p. 108). I would go further to suggest that 'script' here is more than the text of the drama. Rather, I refer to 'script' as the total content of the performance that is seen, heard and felt by the audience. This includes text, plot, staging, lighting, costume and a whole range of aesthetic experiences.

We have therefore the sense of theatre as comprised of performer, performance and audience, that together enable the mirroring of human nature and experience, but also the imaginative exploration of that nature that goes beyond the reflection of mundane reality. The wide scope of such an exploration needs to be considered in relation to the development and use of qualitative research methodologies in the specific context of business and management. With this in mind, and

before turning to an exploration of dramaturgical methodology, the discussion turns briefly to business and organizational literature that spans a nuanced range of views from life as being like theatre (metaphor) to a view that life *is* theatre (ontology). It is necessary to consider this distinction for it has a bearing on how theatre might be used as a research vehicle and more especially on the epistemological nature of dramaturgical methods as qualitative organizational research.

THEATRE AS METAPHOR AND ONTOLOGY

When theatre is viewed merely as a metaphor for life then qualitative, dramaturgical studies of actual social interactions seek understanding of those interactions by the use of dramaturgical coding or labelling. Thus we might have labels like actors and audience, roles and performances, acts and scenes, assigned to aspects of the interaction. Actual theatre does not need to have taken place in this perspective for it is the language of theatre that is being used metaphorically to characterize actual events and interactions in the sense that 'life is like theatre'. This is seen especially in the sociological work of Erving Goffman (1959, 1961, 1963, 1967), as well as in a range of more specific organizational studies looking to bring insight to organizational dynamics such as power relations, leadership and management (Mangham, 1986, 1990). Dramaturgical language is used to denote various roles and dynamics within organizations. For example, Czarniawska-Joerges and Wolff (1991, p. 538) equate leaders with actors: 'successful leadership ... is a dramatic performance which fulfils the expectations of both audience and co-actors ... and, above all, a skilful use of stage set and a talented improvisation, tuned to prevailing moods'. In this regard, there is especial interest in Shakespeare's plays as a source of analogy, particularly in relation to

leadership issues (e.g. Augustine & Adelman, 1999; Corrigan, 1999; Shafritz, 1999; Stevenson, 1996; Whitney & Packer, 2000).

Dramaturgical analogy may be used not only to characterize events but also to model them. Here one might envisage studies where dramatic performances are made in order to present particular social and organizational issues in metaphorical form and thence to study actual responses to those issues. In the organizational literature, the rise of what has been described as organizational theatre (Schreyögg & Höpfl, 2004), which is the direct use of theatre in organizational development and learning, has seen theatre processes used as a basis for direct modelling of how organizational life might be (e.g. Vera & Crosan, 2004; Posner, 2008). Here one thinks of 'life as theatre' (e.g. Czarniawska-Joerges & Wolff, 1991; Mangham, 1986). Further, it has been claimed that in presenting life as theatre it is possible to see more in the presented performances than is permitted by a purely cognitive analysis of social interactions; that theatre permits an aesthetic understanding of organizational life and reveals an 'essence' of meaning and significance that cannot be easily grasped by familiar analytical methods (Taylor, 2003). In other thinking, there is what might be termed interdependence between theatre and life (Sinha, 2010), where each reflects and informs the other. This is especially so in Victor Turner's notion that atypical breaches in the normal course of social interactions may be characterized as social drama that follows a processual path from the acknowledgement of breach to resolution of crisis (Boje, 2003; Turner, 1980). In this view, social conflict is not just like theatre but *is* theatre, following a familiar dramatic journey from crisis to hiatus to resolution, and blurring the distinction between views of 'life as theatre' and 'life is theatre'.

In the ontological view that life is theatre we are not *like* actors on the stage but *are* actors on the social stage and that the fundamental basis of life is dramatic action (Burke, 1969). This is to say that the use of dramaturgical

language moves from labelling and coding used to organize data, to language that explains data, and from the use of dramatic performances to represent social interactions to the study of social interactions as performances in themselves. We see therefore an evolution from the use of theatre as metaphor to elucidate social interactions, to theatre as a model of social interactions and thence to social interactions as theatre. These distinctions are important because the way we view the relationship between life and theatre has a crucial bearing on choice of dramaturgical methodology. Indeed, as we will see, each of the five perspectives that has been elucidated on this relationship provides a different lens through which to look at methodology, with corresponding differences in methodological approach.

In sum, we have five variants of the relationship between life and theatre with an indication of how this variation might give rise to differences in methodology:

- 1 'Life is like theatre' – the use of descriptive, dramaturgical categories to organize interaction, e.g. 'frontstage, backstage'.
- 2 'Life as theatre' – the notion that dramatized action has some equivalence to lived action. Thus dramatized action provides representative and equivalent data.
- 3 'Life is revealed by theatre' – dramaturgical analysis provides insight into social reality.
- 4 'Life and drama are interdependent' – for instance, dramaturgy can be used to map processual movements of social disruption (social drama).
- 5 'Life is theatre' – dramaturgical analysis reveals, describes and explains social reality.

A FRAMEWORK FOR DRAMATURGICAL METHODS

This is not to say that these epistemological options are exhaustive and contain all potential dramaturgical research methods. Rather, they inform the development of a framework

Table 11.1 A framework linking views about theatre and life to different elements of theatre

<i>Actor</i>	<i>Performance</i>	<i>Audience</i>
Life is like theatre		
Life as theatre		
Life is revealed by theatre		
Life and theatre are interdependent		
Life is theatre		

within which to organize these methods, especially in consideration of the triadic nature of theatre that was discussed earlier – actor, performance and audience. Thus, each of these three elements might be considered separately in relation to the five different views of the relation between life and theatre from metaphor to ontology. This is clarified in Table 11.1, empty as yet, but showing the template for a later organization of different dramaturgical methods to form Table 11.2.

It is the contention in this chapter that different dramaturgical research methods can be positioned within this tabulation in order to identify the specific dramaturgical elements being addressed within any study as well as assumptions about how the relation between life and theatre is to be regarded. It may have been noted that the hermeneutics of the relationship and interconnection between ‘life’ and ‘theatre’ are complex and to an extent, defy definition and categorization. Yet, ultimately, theatre and a dramaturgical perspective provide a frame for the active exploration of human expression and of human sense making (Alexander, 2005) as well as an evocative language that is said to facilitate finer analysis (Cannon, 2012) and hence is a potentially rich resource for qualitative research. It is with this in mind that I now consider specific instances of how dramaturgy has been used in qualitative research in business and organizational studies and how these may be situated within the framework in Table 11.1.

DRAMATURGICAL METHODS

In what follows, the intention is not merely to list and describe different dramaturgical research methods but to show how different methods can be organized according to the five different views of the relationship between life and theatre. Further, the intention is to bring a critical eye to this kind of methodology and to point the reader to literature that introduces different studies using different dramaturgical methods. This entails a non-exhaustive review of literature so as to explore how different methods might be positioned on the framework in Table 11.1. This is in order to establish a basis on which to compare and contrast different dramaturgical methods as well as to indicate the potential scope of dramaturgical methods that has to date been insufficiently explored.

LIFE IS LIKE THEATRE

Erving Goffman’s metaphorical frame for life as being like theatre produced a rich vein of sociological study in the second half of the twentieth century (Denzin, 2002; Prasad, 2005) and in particular provides underpinning for research into impression management (e.g. Gardner & Avolio, 1998; Sharma & Grant, 2011). Goffman’s dramaturgical analysis gives us terms such as ‘role’ and ‘role distance’, ‘playing a part’ or ‘routine’, and he describes attempts to influence others as

'performances'. 'Front stage' refers to what is intentionally performed by individuals and 'back stage' to that which is intended to remain hidden from others in interaction. Goffman's emphasis is on the social actor as performer of 'self' and consequently this and similar dramaturgical analyses may be positioned in the 'actor' cell within Table 11.1 on the row 'life is like theatre'. A danger here is that attractive as it is to use metaphor to simplify explanation of behaviour, there is a view that Goffman's terms presuppose an underlying 'reality' for which Goffman's dramaturgy provides a different language, but little more (Denzin, 2002). Thus Goffman's analysis, viewed as structural rather than interpretive, is seen as unequal to the task of accommodating partial, plural, incomplete and contingent understandings in a changing world (Denzin, 2002). Nevertheless, dramaturgical analysis from a metaphorical standpoint continues to hold some attraction (McCormick, 2007), albeit mainly in the context of leadership studies (Down & Reveley, 2009; Gardner & Avolio, 1998; Harvey, 2001; Sharma & Grant, 2011; Sinha, 2010).

Mangham brings his knowledge of theatre to bear on an interpretive understanding of organizational issues, particularly of power relations and is unhesitant about coding individual leader behaviour in theatrical terms (Mangham, 1990, 2001). Gardner and Avolio (1998) position leaders as actors and followers as audience. They propose that the communication of charismatic leaders follows a process of impression management that includes explicit dramaturgical language of framing, scripting, staging and performing. Harvey (2001) uses Gardner and Avolio's scheme to analyse the communication style of Apple's Steve Jobs and highlights conflict as a key, dramaturgical tension. Harvey uses this tension as a frame to explore the way Jobs manages to present himself as both 'one of us' and as individual and separate; how he manages both to respect and disdain his competition; and how he manages to convey

an identity that is both 'nerd' and artist. Here again, we see the focus on 'the actor' within the three elements of theatre.

Although the 'actor' is central in these studies, dramaturgical metaphor can also be applied to script and audience. For example, texts can be analysed for plot, scene, story, hiatus, dramatic development and tension and so on. Indeed, the audience has a place in Goffman's thinking in so far as on the one hand the audience is also giving off performances of self, but on the other is assessing the veracity of the performances of self by other social actors; in this view, we are all audiences of each other.

Dramaturgical metaphor remains useful methodologically and it is unsurprising that it seems to have attached in particular to leadership research, in so far as leadership studies using a dramaturgical frame tend to stress the leader/actor–follower/audience axis (Sinha, 2010). It is arguable, however, that engaging as the dramaturgical metaphor might seem, rather than the metaphor providing a vehicle for expressing that which is difficult to express by other means, it is merely one of many possible languages that might reveal and express the analysis. This is the view of Biehl-Missal for example (2011), who demonstrates a different use of dramaturgical method, eschewing the metaphor of life as being like theatre and instead working with the aesthetics of organizational performances that are not like theatre, but which may be construed *as* theatre and in this respect, amenable to research of the theatrical and aesthetic components of such performances.

LIFE AS THEATRE

Several writers have expressed the view that organizational life is akin to theatre in a number of ways (Czarniawska-Joerges & Wolff, 1991; Mangham & Overington, 1987; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Vaill, 1989). For example, Mangham and Overington (1987,

p. 52) show how the preparation of role, character, motivation and techniques of presenting underlie the subtle negotiation of power and the authentic nature of performance. In the theatre, we may become aware of inconsistencies and disruptions that expose the artificiality of what is presented. Mangham and Overington show how the same applies in socially constructed realities like the boardroom of a company, and thus theatre makes us aware of the relation between intentions and acts, context and resources for action.

The Aesthetics of Performance

Biehl-Missal (2011) expands this thinking by positioning certain managerial acts as ‘performances’ that can be interrogated as such rather than viewed through the lens of theatre. This still entails the study of the relation between ‘intentions and acts, context and resources for action’, but by framing her research as the study of the aesthetics of performance she is able to ‘zoom away’ from the dramatic interest in actor and audience and observe the more detailed interplay of a range of different agents and agency such as scenography, lighting, clothing, managers’ performance style, rhetoric, audience interaction and so on. Yet all these elements still have dramaturgical significance for it is common within dramatic texts for writers to specify aspects of staging and playing style, hence this methodology may be centred on ‘performance’ and ‘life as theatre’ in Table 11.1.

Performance Analysis

In highlighting the aesthetics of performance, Biehl-Missal introduces a new tool for performance analysis, which provides a method for data collection and data organization as well as for data analysis.

This performance analysis tool is developed from the work of Pavis (1985, 2003)

and adds atmospheric and bodily sensations to the more familiar visual and linguistic experiences and texts of theatre to produce an over-arching, non-hierarchical ‘performance text’ that enables the researcher to experience and absorb as much as possible of what is both signified and materialized in the performance, without needing to convert this into an ‘abstract and fixed sign’ (Biehl-Missal, 2011, p. 622).

Biehl-Missal takes Pavis’s tabulation of standardized components of aesthetic analysis of performance (Pavis, 1985) and adapts it for her research of staged corporate presentations, reducing the emphasis on more overtly dramatic components like text and storyline and translating these elements into an analysis of the rhetorical devices used. She also accentuates the aesthetic rather than theatrical perspective, including for example, ‘smell’ in the analysis and stressing the aesthetic contribution to the experience of the co-presence of the audience. Biehl-Missal visited seventeen AGMs and nineteen press conferences and completed her adapted catalogue for each event. The data production and collection were based on dramaturgical principles and then expanded and articulated in a number of ways that are familiar in qualitative research. For example, she added data from archived records of the events in question and then looked for recurring patterns and motifs across all the data through constant iterative comparison.

Biehl-Missal claims that she has moved the analytical ‘script’ away from explicit theatrical terminology that tends to privilege traditional theatre roles, towards an understanding of the aesthetics of performance in an organizational context. At the same time, she has not relinquished the implication that organization may be viewed as theatre. Bearing in mind the sense of theatre as a triadic collusion of performer, performance and audience, one might discern in her analysis that she has reflected in a non-hierarchical way upon performance regarded as the total aesthetic content of performer-audience interactions. Her

study is essentially of the aesthetic impact of performance on the audience. The discussion now moves to methodology that looks at this same performance-audience interaction but through the means of explicitly staged theatre.

LIFE AS REVEALED THROUGH THEATRE

Staged Theatre

Thus far we have considered dramaturgical methods that look through a dramaturgical lens at 'real-life' situations but not at explicitly staged theatre. In this latter case, plays are made and performed on stage in order to effect discussion and change in the audience. One of the most prominent forms of staged theatre in organizations is adapted from Augusto Boal's Forum Theatre, which is a core instrument of Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, designed to prime and catalyse direct action against social injustice (Boal, 1979). It is not the intention to discuss Forum Theatre in depth here because whilst a form of it is much used in a training context and has been researched as such (Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Rae, 2011, 2013) it seems barely to have been used as an instrument for intentional qualitative research in an organizational context, although Sommerfeldt (2015) offers Forum Theatre as a research method for investigating teams and team-working in North American health care.

Staged theatre has been used intentionally as research instrument in a number of ways. For instance, Taylor (2003, 2008) makes theatre in both academic and organizational contexts advancing an epistemology that derives from aesthetic, sensory knowing, which in turn informs rational thought (Taylor & Hansen, 2005). This aesthetic approach emphasizes the study of experience rather than the study of objects and is deemed to be more appropriate than a conventional, 'scientific'

approach for capturing how organizational audiences 'feel' about aspects of academic and organizational life (Strati, 1996; Taylor, 2008). Taylor's approach is about the making and presenting of staged plays followed by post-event discussion and written communication with audience members. Performance is used creatively and ironically in order to reach out to the aesthetic sensibilities of the audience, and it is the impact upon the audience that is of research interest. A denser and less artistically creative research methodology that seeks to engage audience response is that offered by what researchers term *ethnodrama* (Miencaowski & Morgan, 2006).

Ethnodrama

In *ethnodrama*, scripts and plays about social issues are evolved and written after careful ethnographic research with those implicated and involved in the social problematic. It has been used for instance in research of the treatment of rape victims and of alcoholics in Australia. Examples of interviewees' written and spoken accounts may be transferred directly into the scripts of staged plays. Great care is taken to engage participation of key stakeholders at every stage of the process, of which the intended outcome is to negotiate and construct new understandings and meanings both for participants and audiences. A grounded theory approach is taken to the gathering of accounts from all stakeholders. Triangulated material is returned to informants for comment, with the question, 'What do you want to tell an audience of health workers, health service providers, care-givers or young people about the experience of ... whatever the subject of research is?' (Miencaowski & Morgan, 2006, p. 177). From here a list of themes and scenarios is drawn up with continuing informant-led discussion and feedback before scripting of the play begins. Thus, the intention of the researchers, as with much action research, is to give voice to the informants, and indeed

theatre provides a site for the projection of a polyphony of voices around any chosen theme. The researchers feel it crucial to represent that genuine voice and will not depart into fictionalized narrative without validation by informants as representative of their experiences (Mienczaowski & Morgan, 2006, p. 178). As the researchers note, 'This is not theatre for artistic pretension, aesthetic appeasement or entertainment' (Mienczaowski & Morgan, 2006, p. 178). Rather, their intention is to use familiar dramaturgical devices to communicate issues to concerned audiences as a means of generating debate at the end of the performance. This then provides opportunity for debrief, for learning, for reflection and for reflexivity and may lead to post-event surveys. Throughout the process the dramaturgical action research method used is embedded in rigorous and ethical qualitative research practice, always foregrounding the voice of the informants who are often representatives of the intended audiences for the work.

Performance Ethnography

A somewhat different approach that overlaps with ethnodrama but foregrounds the performer as opposed to the voice of the informants is performance ethnography. Performance ethnography has a complex philosophical base that has its roots in performance studies, regarded as a dialogic engagement between self and other through both performance and ethnography (Alexander, 2005). Performance ethnography situates performance as the experiential setting in which participants gain ethnographic understanding of 'the variables that shape and affect cultural knowing' (Alexander, 2005, p. 430), whilst ethnodrama is more about ethnography that is represented and accentuated through the mirror of drama. In a sense, the centre of gravity of the research endeavour might be said to move from the representative audience in ethnodrama to the performer in performance

ethnography. In the former case, the work is to foreground the voice of the other. In the latter case, it is for the performer to have an embodied experience of the cultural predicaments and associations that underpin, inform and construct the other's voice and in so doing come to a greater understanding both of other and of self.

Radical Performance of 'the Other' in Business?

Do these methodologies that use theatre to come to greater understanding of other and self, have a place in organizational research? The answer is yes, but there are likely to be difficulties in creating a space in organizations for this kind of research to take place. Forum Theatre for example, has been used widely in organizational training if not in research and so there seems to be an appetite for viewing plays as a training methodology, especially as Forum Theatre tends to emphasize conflict and dysfunction and in particular explores behaviour that addresses conflict. Consequently, Forum Theatre has potential as a research methodology to explore actors' responses to political and cultural tensions, perhaps even oppressions, within organizations. Were theatre to be seen as more equivalent to and less metaphorical about actual world experience, dramaturgical methods of enquiry might be seen as less radical and more relevant in business and organizational settings. In other words, an acknowledgement of the interdependence of theatre and life might make methods such as ethnodrama and performance ethnography seem more valid in a business context.

LIFE AND THEATRE ARE MUTUALLY INTERDEPENDENT

The sense of life and theatre as being interdependent underlies Victor Turner's 'social

drama', which looks at the drama of political and cultural tensions. Turner describes social drama as 'constituting isolatable and minutely describable units of social processes that arise when interests and attitudes of groups and individuals stood in obvious opposition' (Turner, 1974, p. 33). For Turner, the drama first manifests itself as 'a breach of a norm, the infraction of a rule of morality, rule of etiquette, law, custom, or etiquette in some public arena' (Turner, 1980, p. 150). To an extent social drama is a focus on 'plot' – the dramatic structure of the story. As noted above, plot is considered to be contained within the category of performance. Turner's social drama has four phases of public action summarized by Boje (2003) as:

- 1 Breach of norm-governed social relations that have liminal characteristics, a liminal [space] between more or less stable social processes.
- 2 Crisis, during which there is a tendency for the breach to widen and in public forums, representatives of order are dared to grapple with it.
- 3 Redressive action, ranging from personal advice and informal mediation or arbitration to formal juridical and legal machinery, and to resolve certain kinds of crisis or legitimate other modes of resolution, to the performance of public ritual.
- 4 Reintegration of the disturbed social group, or of the social recognition and legitimation of irreparable schism between the contesting parties.

Each of these phases institutes the premises for the next phase (Turner, 1985, p. 48), thus the process is on the one hand more dynamic than Goffman's dramaturgical analysis but is also less mundane in that for Turner dramaturgical analysis is initiated when crises arise in the usual flow of social interaction; when there is 'breach', and a mismatch in perceptions about what constitutes 'usual flow'. Sinha (2010) suggests that Turner's social drama can be used particularly in leadership research because 'it provides a form of activity through which leaders and followers can jointly confront their normal ways of perceiving organizational issues, valuing organizational goals, and recognizing behaviour

and actions that are causative and preventative of crisis' (Sinha, 2010, p. 199). There is a potentially wider research application in organizations where an understanding of the processual path of social drama enables an insightful penetration into a range of organizational tensions and dissonances, not merely those on a leader-follower axis and consequently presents as a potential analytical research tool for interrogating obviously dissonant or disruptive performances but also less apparent tensions. Weick (1995, p. 8) points out that ambiguity and discomfort are ever present even within normative relations within organizations. Novitz (2002) suggests actual life is the prime source of theatre and if Weick is correct, ever present ambiguity and discomfort and their impact on human behaviour are potent seeds for theatre and may even be regarded as constituting theatre in themselves.

LIFE IS THEATRE

Thus far we have considered theatre and the dramaturgical language of theatre as metaphorical vehicles for extended thinking about social relations and how that might be used methodologically. Moving to consideration of 'life is theatre' entails a profound shift in ontological positioning. It means that dramaturgical language is as much the 'writing of life' as it is the writing of theatre and that dramaturgy is not so much a mere terministic screen (Burke, 1969; Fox, 2002) through which to describe action, as a potential comprehensive explanation of social relations. The philosopher Kenneth Burke attempted such a comprehensive explanation.

The Dramatistic Pentad

Burke sees life as little distinguishable from drama in the way we make sense of the world (Burke, 1969) and hence how we

explain human relations and the way we enact them. For Burke the success of our interactions is connected to the causal conditions of Act – the deed or event done, Agent – the doer of that deed, Agency – the means by which the act was done, Scene – the background to the Act, and Purpose – why the deed was done. These five causal conditions constitute the dramatic ‘pentad’ (Burke, 1969). Although Burke generated these causal principles for the analysis of text, they have been extended as a resource for understanding any human activity. Overington (1977) explains that it is only through an understanding of the interaction of the pentad that a true picture of causality emerges. The pentadic language of what is referred to as dramatism is not to be seen as a simple, metaphorical transfer of dramaturgical language into the analysis of non-theatrical contexts, but as the interplay of pentadic terms that constitutes an explanation of social action. The terms are linked in that there is an insistent, dramatic requirement that one pentadic element gives rise to another (Overington, 1977). As Burke himself points out, ‘It is the principle of drama that the nature of acts and agents should be consistent with the nature of the scene’ (Burke, 1969, p. 3). Thus a particular setting or Scene creates expectation for certain Agents and Acts to be present therein. Similarly, a particular Agent creates expectation for certain Agency and Acts to be associated with that Agent. Burke expresses these associations as ‘ratios’. The ratios give rise to assumed cause and effect sequences where for example, if someone kills another person and that act is called a ‘murder’, the term itself requires (causes) a search to be made for a ‘murderer’ (Overington, 1977, p. 134). Mangham and Overington (1987, p. 70) insist that a Burkean analysis is incomplete without consideration of both the single pentadic terms and the pentadic ratios.

In the pentadic ratios one sees an extended, systematic examination of how different dramaturgical elements interact. We have

seen in the methods already outlined that there tends to be an emphasis on a particular element of the actor, performance, audience triad and how this impacts on one or both of the other elements. Exploration of the pentadic ratios ranges across all three theatrical elements, though one has to be wary of simplistic reduction particularly as a number of writers comment on the complexity of Burke’s thinking that makes it difficult to approach and handle methodologically (Fox, 2002; Mangham & Overington, 1983; Overington, 1977; Sinha, 2010). Nevertheless, a number of studies have attempted to use the pentad and pentadic ratios in organizational research.

Empirical Use of the Pentad

These studies include reflections on the study of leadership (Sinha, 2010), the study of a family business in America (Graham-Hill & Grimes, 2001), the analysis of a company outing (Walker & Monin, 2001), the analysis of a case study of technical writers (Fox, 2002) and in the analysis of the use of professional actors in organizational training (Birch, 2014).

Walker and Monin (2001) used the individual categories of the pentad in the analysis of the cultural and political tensions that adhered to a ten-year anniversary celebration of a New Zealand based company. This study demonstrated the application of the pentad in simple, categorical terms, but the authors recognized a synthesis of their analysis through a ratios treatment might have provided deeper understanding of the ambiguities that surrounded the event.

Taking this cue, Fox (2002) applied the pentad as ratios in the critical analysis of a ‘workplace drama’ in order to avoid the reductive nature of a single ‘terministic screen’ (Burke, 1969). Fox regards the pentad as providing multiple screens whereby to grasp but not reduce, ‘the messy and complex nature of human interactions’ (Fox, 2002, p. 367),

arguing that the pentad is generative rather than reductive and capable of disclosing multiple truths beyond 'the real'. This use of multiple screens would seem to have some methodological value, though the use of the pentadic ratios in analysis remains interpretive and to date there appears to be little guidance or rule as to how to apply the pentad methodologically. Overington notes that dramaturgical method offers little on the subject of sampling and data collection, and that the interpretation of connotations between pentadic terms is influenced by the analyst's experience. Yet for Overington (1977, p. 150) there are two distinct methodological criteria to be followed in a dramaturgical analysis: 'First, identify the key analytic terms in the explanation; and second, explore the connotational links in dialectical clusters formed by these key analytic terms under the pentadic rubric'. These were the two principles adhered to in my own doctoral research of the use of a specific organizational theatre method, which I have termed Forum Conversations (Birch, 2014), and in the next section I briefly outline how I applied the 'pentadic rubric' and the connotational links.

The Use of Burke's Dramaturgical Pentad in the Analysis of Forum Conversations

Forum Conversations (FCs) is a means of helping people to role-play and rehearse their own difficult real-life conversations, using professional actors to stand in for the difficult others involved. My own research interest was in understanding the impact of this method. The identification of the key analytical terms (those which could be represented as the individual pentadic elements) in preparation for the ratio analysis seemed straightforward in that the process of FCs is in itself a dramaturgical method where the 'Agents' – professional actors and organizational actors – come together to reproduce and rehearse the organizational actors' own difficult

conversations. 'Scene' is a gathering in a neutral space of no more than six organizational actors with one professional actor; stage and audience areas are demarcated merely by separating individual participants from the main group for the rehearsed conversation. The Act(s) in question are the improvised conversations followed by discussion, and Agency is constituted by the skill of the professional actor to recreate real events. The Purpose of the event is to help organizational actors deal with difficult others at work.

The determination of the key analytical terms, labelled as the five different pentadic elements, is akin to the reductive labelling in Goffman's analyses. However, it is the exploration of the interaction of these elements via the pentadic ratios that introduces consideration of causality. There are ten possible pentadic ratio pairs (Burke, 1969, p. 15). However, the selection of the pentadic ratios to be examined is a matter of research design. I chose only five ratios: Scene-Purpose, Scene-Agent, Scene-Act, Agent-Act and Agent-Agency because I was interested in the influence of FCs as 'Scene' on the Purpose of the event, and on how FCs as a dramaturgical process connoted certain types of Agent and their consequent Acts and finally on how these Agents effected their Acts – their Agency. In other words, how does this process that brings together professional actors and organizational actors to produce an improvised enactment of the organizational actors' difficult conversations, actually help the organizational actors? And what are the roles of the different actors in the process; how do they see themselves and how do they behave?

The chosen pentadic pairings enabled a further key aspect of the analysis, which was to follow Burke's suggestion (Overington, 1977) to consider any contradictions thrown up by the ratios. Thus one contrasted the anticipated and unanticipated connotations within the ratios. For instance, one might anticipate that professional actors act, but not

necessarily that they behave as organizational development consultants. Also one might anticipate that organizational actors perform, but not that they are the dramaturges of the performance.

Although Fox (2002) argues that this extended ratio analysis presents multiple, terministic screens and hence minimizes reduction in the analysis, I found reduction to be unavoidable even though dealing with paired ratios, rather than single categories. At the same time, I found that shifting perspective from one ratio to the next helped to accumulate a more complexly nuanced total understanding of the FC's process. The analytical connotations of each ratio were not separate or simply additive, but rather, to use Burke's word, were 'spun' into the overall analysis (Overington, 1977, p. 145). This is in the sense of spinning a web and hence the analysis could be regarded as generative rather than reductive (Fox, 2002). A pentadic analysis is essentially interpretive. But because it looks at a situation from different dialectical clusters anchored in the ratios, it enables the development of multiple, terministic screens through which to sift the data. Analysis is spun together to create a generative interpretation that seems to escape reduction and rather to overspill the initial frame of the research.

This sense of generative could also be applied to the reflexivity in the participants' experience. Participants in FCs often experience the very things they anticipate will make their difficult conversation 'difficult' – for example, feeling emotional or out of control. Instance the female manager, who thought she must not express emotion at work and via her FC became aware of the tension between her constrained emotion and her presented 'emotionless' self. Consider too, the project manager who followed the rule that the customer is always right, but who in so doing became a victim of bullying by a customer, something that he also 'saw' in his FC. This is reflexivity beyond 'the mirror up to nature'.

POPULATING THE FRAMEWORK FOR DRAMATURGICAL METHODS

All of the dramaturgical methods mentioned here might seem at times to struggle to contain this overspill of analysis within their research frames by virtue of the dynamic reciprocity between the different elements of actor/performer, performance and audience that arguably constitute what we think of as theatre. If the research focus is on leaders as performers or actors, it is difficult not to consider the effect of their performances on their audiences. If one focuses on the audience one must consider that which they observe. If one focuses on performance, as perhaps in the cataloguing of the aesthetics of performance (e.g. Biehl-Missal, 2011), one has to consider the impact of those aesthetics on an audience. This dynamic drift across all three elements of theatre is further complicated by the different epistemological nuances of life in relation to theatre, and we have seen how theatre may be viewed as metaphor, model, revelation, social process and 'life'. Thus it is difficult to hold things fast in our research methodology especially in view of what Schechner calls 'the myriad contact points and overlaps, tensions and loose spots' (1988, p. 362) in the comparison between performance in theatre and performativity in life.

Nevertheless, in an attempt to bring some kind of order to this looseness, the various methods outlined in this chapter are now positioned on the outline framework in Table 11.1. This produces Table 11.2, which should be seen as exploratory rather than definitive, but shows how different methods might be positioned in terms of epistemological assumptions and in the emphasis they give to different aspects of theatre. In Table 11.2, different methods with example literature are circled and positioned in relation to where their emphasis lies. Arrows indicate where, for example, an emphasis on the 'actor' leads to consideration of their performance(s), or where a study of performance leads to

Table 11.2 Dramaturgical methods in relation to perspectives about the relationship between life and theatre and to three elements that constitute theatre

Actor		Performance	Audience
Life is like theatre	Presentation of 'Self' <i>Goffman, 1959</i>	→	
	Impression Management <i>Sharma & Grant 2011</i>	→	
	Leaders are like actors <i>Gardner & Avolio, 1998</i> <i>Harvey, 2001; Mangham, 1990</i>	→	
Life as theatre	Analysis of Corporate Life as Theatre <i>Mangham & Overington, 1987</i>		
	Aesthetics of Performance <i>Biehl-Missal, 2011</i>	→	
	Staged Theatre <i>Taylor, 2003</i>	→	
Life is revealed by theatre	Ethnodrama <i>Miencaowski & Morgan, 2006</i>	→	
	Performance Ethnography <i>Alexander, 2005</i>	→	→
Life and theatre are interdependent	Plot: Social Drama <i>Turner, 1974, 1980</i>		
Life is theatre	Pentadic Ratios <i>Burke, 1959</i> <i>Fox, 2002</i> <i>Birch, 2014</i>		

research of the audience response. It will be noted that pentadic ratio analysis sits across all theatre elements in the 'life is theatre' row. This is because the pentadic ratios emphasize all elements of theatre. Whilst this framework for the organization and comparison of different methods remains speculative, one can see that there are a number of potential areas for research that seem to have been less explored. For example, if there is credence to the notion of dynamic reciprocity between the three elements of actor, performance and audience, then there is opportunity to look more at the influence of audience on performances and performers. In a business context, it is common to research the customer as audience but perhaps less so the 'follower' as audience and perhaps neither is explored very much in dramaturgical terms.

CONCLUSION

Dramaturgical methods offer a range of qualitative tools for researchers. The dramaturgical metaphor enables a coherent and integrated organization of data within an intuitively understood frame of reference (arguably key to the success of Goffman's analysis), but as such is especially sensitive to basic assumptions as with all qualitative methodology. If nothing else, the dramaturgical metaphor provides a ready-made coding system (e.g. Saldaña, 2009). Dramaturgy is essentially the language of action and hence is useful in the description, if somewhat less so in the explanation, of behaviour. Further, the 'actor/audience' axis has been used to translate as 'leader/follower' and hence dramaturgy figures in research and writing about leadership. Dramaturgical method enables research to be shown to others as for example in ethnodrama and performance ethnology, and this is a powerful means of sharing research findings to a broad and diverse audience, and thence to further research. Moreover, the staged performance

of research findings, particularly in the context of social need, can give a voice to those who find it difficult to be heard and for making portrayal of need vivid and inescapable and this further adds to the qualitative strength of dramaturgical method.

As dramaturgical research has moved towards performance studies and the aesthetics of performance, a yet finer analysis has been made possible as we see particularly in Biehl-Missal's work. It has enabled the dramaturgically based study of performance and behaviour to move beyond simple metaphor to a deeper, qualitative examination of questions about 'essence' and meaning that some contend cannot easily be attempted by quantitative methods (e.g. Taylor, 2003). Also Miencaowski and Morgan (2006) for example, have shown how to integrate a grounded theory approach with theatre performance and thus to an understanding of how dramaturgy can display and enhance rigorous qualitative work.

Whilst the Burkean pentadic approach perhaps remains tenuous in application, the starting point of analysis has an accessible approach whereby key analytical figures are identified first as metaphor. Thence ratio analysis of the connotations between analytical metaphors provides multiple perspectives that might be said to fold into each other, enabling finely nuanced qualitative insights to be spun from the analysis, and this warrants more exploration and application.

The question still remains as to whether dramaturgically based analysis merely provides another, albeit interesting, language for expressing what other qualitative methods and other analytical languages can also express. The selection of dramaturgical method might then be regarded merely as a matter of taste. Further, researchers need to be fully cognizant of dramaturgical terms, along with their implications and associations, to be able to use them effectively. There is also conceivable limitation in scope of research application in that because dramaturgy is fundamentally about action, it tends to be used to explore

behaviour and performance. In respect of performance it is no surprise therefore to see how dramaturgy is often used in leadership studies, but in few other contexts. Goffman's metaphors and Burke's pentad have been used outside of leadership studies, but there remains doubt about the validity of the transfer of pentad analysis from its intended use in the analysis of text with its emphasis on language and rhetoric to the direct examination of action and social interaction (Overington, 1977).

Interesting as the use of performed theatre is in presenting research, it can be exacting and onerous to create, also requiring special skills and knowledge to align research with performance. Further, it requires resource and time that might not easily be at most researchers' disposal. Drama can also be used to convert meanings into performance and thus potentially to transform them erroneously, where for example, attempts to present real accounts creatively might distort the original meanings (Miencaowski & Morgan, 2006).

This last point also has ethical significance and Miencaowski and Morgan (2006) are alert to performances that use ethnographically derived material as a creative platform that is not true to the original material, something that requires constant discipline and scrutiny as with all qualitative research. Miencaowski and Morgan also note instances of performances that have exposed naïve performers to discomfort, as where schizophrenic patients in the audience have not understood theatrical conventions about the separation between performance and audience spaces and disturbed the action on stage. Where performance ethnography encourages the exploration and performance of difference in order to increase awareness of self and other, one surely has to be wary of the extent to which others might be used merely as educative props for self-discovery. Theatre in general has the potential to be disruptive for audiences and participants alike and this needs to be carefully managed.

When considering the future of dramaturgical methods, if, as has been suggested, life is theatre, then dramaturgical-based framing and accounts are increasingly appropriate as a qualitative means of expressing and examining social interactions. The move towards performance studies and aesthetics in the understanding of behaviour in organizations presents a basis for a more finely nuanced use of dramaturgical language in qualitative research, beyond the simple use of dramaturgical metaphor, revealing as this might be about behaviour and motive. Cole (1975) is of the view that theatre is a site for making imagined truth a present reality. This means that dramaturgical methods represent a potent qualitative research site for interrogating imagined truth and present reality in organizational life – for showing 'the very age and body of the time his form and pressure'. The qualitative methodologies highlighted in this chapter might serve to support that research.

REFERENCES

- Alexander, B.K. (2005) 'Performance ethnography: The reenacting and inciting of culture', in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y. (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 3rd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 411–42.
- Augustine, N. and Adelman, K. (1999) *Shakespeare in Charge: The Bard's Guide to Leading and Succeeding on the Business Stage*. New York: Hyperion Miramax Books.
- Biehl-Missal, B. (2011) Business is show business: presentations as performance, *Journal of Management Studies*, 48(3), pp. 619–45.
- Birch, P.A.C. (2014) *Forum Conversations: An Organisational Theatre Method for Improving managers' Interpersonal Communication*. PhD. Manchester Business School.
- Boal, A. (1979) *Theatre of the Oppressed*. London: Pluto Press.
- Boal, A. (1995) *The Rainbow of Desire*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Boje, D.M. (2003) Victor Turner's postmodern theory of social drama: Implications for organization studies. Available at: business.

- nmsu.edu/~dboje/theatrics/7/victor_turner.htm (accessed 3 December 2013)
- Burke, K. (1969) *A Grammar of Motives*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Cannon, A. (2012) Making the data perform: An ethnodramatic analysis. *Qualitative Inquiry* 18(7), pp. 583–94.
- Cole, D. (1975) *The Theatrical Event: A Mythos, a Vocabulary, a Perspective*. Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Corrigan, P. (1999) *Shakespeare on Management: Leadership Lessons for Today's Managers*. London: Kogan Page.
- Czarniawska-Joerges, B. and Wolff, R. (1991) Leaders, managers, entrepreneurs on and off the organizational stage. *Organisation Studies*, 12(4), pp. 529–46.
- Denzin, N.K. (2002) Much ado about Goffman. *The American Sociologist*, 33(2), pp. 105–17.
- Down, S. and Reveley, J. (2009) Between narration and interaction: Situating first-line supervisor identity work. *Human Relations* 62(3), pp. 379–401.
- Fox, C. (2002) Beyond the 'tyranny of the real': Revisiting Burke's pentad as research method for professional communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 11(4), pp. 365–88.
- Gardner, W.L. and Avolio, B.J. (1998) The charismatic relationship: A dramaturgical perspective. *Academy of Management Review*, 23(1), pp. 32–58.
- Goffman, E. (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor Doubleday.
- Goffman, E. (1961) *Asylums*. New York: Doubleday.
- Goffman, E. (1963) On face-work: An analysis of ritual elements in social interaction. In *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior*. New York: Doubleday, pp. 5–46.
- Goffman, E. (1967) *Interaction Ritual, on Face-Work: An Analysis of Ritual Elements in Social Interaction*. New York: Doubleday.
- Graham-Hill, S. and Grimes, A.J. (2001) Dramatism as method: The promise of *praxis*. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 14(3), pp. 280–94.
- Harvey, A. (2001) A dramaturgical analysis of charismatic leader discourse. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 14(3), pp. 253–65.
- Mangham, I.L. (1986) *Power and Performance in Organizations: An Explanation of Executive Process*. Oxford, UK: Blackwells.
- Mangham, I.L. (1990) Managing as a performing art. *British Journal of Management*, 1 (2), pp. 105–15.
- Mangham, I.L. (2001) Afterword: Looking for Henry. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 14(3), pp. 295–304.
- Mangham, I.L. and Overington, M.A. (1983) 'Dramatism and the theatrical metaphor', in Morgan, G. (ed.) *Beyond Method*. London: Sage, pp. 219–33.
- Mangham, I.L. and Overington, M.A. (1987) *Organizations as Theatre: A Social Psychology of Dramatic Appearances*. Chichester, UK: Wiley.
- McCormick, D.W. (2007) Dramaturgical analysis of organizational change and conflict. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 20(5), pp. 685–99.
- Meisiek, S. and Barry, D. (2007) Through the looking glass of organizational theatre: Analogically mediated inquiry in organizations. *Organization Studies*, 28(12), pp. 1805–27.
- Meisiek, S. and Barry, D. (2010) Seeing more and seeing differently: Sensemaking, mindfulness, and the workarts. *Organization Studies*, 31(11), pp. 1505–30.
- Miencaowski, J. and Morgan, S. (2006) 'Ethnodrama: Constructing participatory, experiential and compelling action research through performance', in Reason, P. and Bradbury, H. (eds.) *Handbook of Action Research*. London: Sage, pp. 176–84.
- Novitz, D. (2002) *The Boundaries of Art*. 2nd edn. Christchurch, NZ: Cybereditions.
- Overington, M.A. (1977) Kenneth Burke and the method of dramatism. *Theory and Society*, 4(1), pp. 131–56.
- Pavis, P. (1985) Theatre analysis: Some questions and a questionnaire. *New Theatre Quarterly*, 1(2), 208–12.
- Pavis, P. (2003) *Analyzing Performance, Theater, Dance, and Film*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Pine, B.J. and Gilmore, J.H. (1999) *The Experience Economy: Work is Theatre and Every Business a Stage*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Posner, B.Z. (2008) The play's the thing: Reflections on leadership from the theater. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 17(1), pp. 35–41.
- Prasad, P. (2005) *Crafting Qualitative Research: Working in the Postpositivist Traditions*. London: M.E. Sharpe.

- Rae, J. (2011) *A Study of the Use of Organisational Theatre: The Case of Forum Theatre*. PhD dissertation, Durham e-theses.
- Rae, J. (2013) Facilitating learning spaces in forum theatre. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 37(2), pp. 220–36.
- Saldaña, J. (2009). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Schechner, R. (1988) *Performance Theory*. London: Routledge.
- Schreyögg, G. and Höpfl, H. (2004) Theatre and organization: Editorial introduction. *Organization Studies*, 25(5), pp. 691–704.
- Shafritz, J. (1999) *Shakespeare on Management: Wise Business Counsel from the Bard*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Sharma, A. and Grant, D. (2011) Narrative, drama and charismatic leadership: The case of Apple's Steve Jobs. *Leadership*, 7(1), pp. 3–26
- Sinha, P.N. (2010) The dramatistic genre in leadership studies: Implications for research and practice. *Leadership*, 6(2), pp. 185–205.
- Sommerfeldt, S.C. (2015) The mangle of interprofessional health care teams: A performative study using forum theater. *Global Qualitative Nursing Research*, 2(2), pp. 1–12.
- Stevenson, W.B. (1996) A muse of fire or a winter of discontent? Teaching Shakespeare in the leadership course. *Journal of Management Education*, 20(1), pp. 39–47.
- Strati, A. (1996) Organizations viewed through the lens of aesthetics. *Organization*, 3(2), pp. 209–18.
- Taylor, S.S. (2003) Knowing in your gut and in your head: Doing theater and my underlying epistemology of communication. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 17(2), pp. 272–9.
- Taylor, S.S. (2008) Theatrical performance as unfreezing: Ties that bind at the Academy of Management. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 17(4), pp. 398–406.
- Taylor, S.S. and Hansen, H. (2005) Finding form: Looking at the field of organizational aesthetics. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(6), pp. 1211–31.
- Taylor, S.S. and Ladkin, D. (2009) Understanding arts based methods in managerial development. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 8(1), pp. 55–69.
- Turner, V. (1974) Liminal to liminoid, in play, flow, and ritual: An essay in comparative symbology. *Rice University Lecture Series*, 60(3), pp. 53–92.
- Turner, V. (1980) *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness at Play*. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications.
- Turner, V. (1985). *On the Edge of the Bush: Anthropology as Experience*. Turner, E.L.B. (ed.). Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press.
- Vaill, P.B. (1989) *Managing as a Performing Art*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Vera, D. and Crossan, M. (2004) Theatrical Improvisations: Lessons for Organizations. *Organization Studies*, 25(5), pp. 727–49.
- Walker, R. and Monin, N. (2001) The purpose of the picnic: Using Burke's dramatistic pentad to analyse a company event. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 14(3), pp. 266–79.
- Weick, K.E. (1995) *Sensemaking in Organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Whitney, J.O. and Packer, T. (2000) *Power Plays: Shakespeare's Lessons in Leadership and Management*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Capturing the Complexity of Daily Workplace Experiences Using Qualitative Diaries

Laura S. Radcliffe

INTRODUCTION

We are all familiar with diaries; from diaries we rely on to effectively plan our time, to more extensive journals capturing our daily experiences, thoughts and emotions. Researchers, particularly those who tend to utilise qualitative approaches, frequently keep personal reflective diaries with the aim of enabling greater critical awareness of their own impact on the research process, therefore enhancing the quality of qualitative research (e.g. Johnson & Duberley, 2003; Nadin & Cassell, 2006). In this way diaries are acknowledged as useful ways to record and analyse our personal experiences, encouraging introspection and reflection, and, in doing so, learning more about ourselves, our feelings, our thoughts and our behaviours.

Thinking about diaries in this manner allows us to easily consider how they might also be useful in collecting interesting participant data, encouraging participant introspection and permitting in-depth insights into daily

experiences and processes. In this way, diaries offer clear potential in terms of their ability to uncover and explore the meaningfulness of participants' ordinary lives in everyday situations, enabling our understanding of events from their perspectives. In thinking about the purpose and aims of a substantial amount of management and organisational research, we are often concerned with processes, including how and why people behave in the way they do. Indeed, editorial boards of leading journals, including the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* and the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* have made calls for more dynamic research in the field of organisational behaviour. For instance, a call for papers issued by the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* (Hofmans et al., 2016) asks for contributions that 'capture the dynamics of work', noting that there is an increasing awareness that much organisation and management phenomena are inherently temporal in nature and therefore that it is vital that we capture, explore and subsequently

begin to understand, how such phenomena evolve and change over time.

Such calls, and a parallel awareness of the importance of approaches that can capture temporal elements of experiences in moving organisation and management research forward, are increasing in frequency. For instance, Spector and Meier (2014) have expressed concern with the infrequency with which research in this area focuses explicitly on exploring processes as they unfold over time, but instead relies heavily on cross-sectional research. They concluded that repeated assessments afforded by daily diary studies could be particularly useful in illuminating organisational behaviour processes to explore how sequences of events, and related states, unfold. Qualitative diaries have also previously been recognised for their capacity to enable deep analysis of individuals' internal processes and practices within organisations (Plowman, 2010; Symon, 2004), as well as of the internal workings of organisations themselves (Plowman, 2010).

When considering such research aims, along with the capacity of diaries to achieve these aims, it might initially be somewhat surprising that diaries, particularly those that are qualitative in nature, are utilised relatively infrequently. One apparent reason for the underutilisation of diary research in the field of organisations and management is that, while highly rewarding in terms of their capacity to capture dynamic organisational phenomena, there are also numerous challenges in using this approach; from acquiring participants who are willing to give up their time on a regular basis, to ensuring that diaries are effectively completed without the presence of the researcher (Radcliffe, 2013). Such challenges will be discussed later in this chapter, while also arguing for perseverance in order to achieve the rich data collection benefits that this method affords. While currently underutilised, diaries are increasingly recognised as a valuable method in organisational and management research (van Eerde et al., 2005) and in recent years we have seen

a resurgence of interest in this approach. This perhaps reflects a time where the monopoly of positivistic notions of rationality has been weakened within the social sciences, and an increased appreciation of the role of narrative in enabling us to uncover new ideas and connections between events, has come to the fore (Roe, 2008).

The chapter begins by providing a brief overview of prior research utilising diaries in the management field. It then focuses on making a case for greater use of qualitative diaries in management and organisational research, with the aim of highlighting the importance of capturing, and understanding, complex daily processes, practices and experiences. Next, the practicalities of conducting qualitative diary research are discussed, with the aim of making such research more accessible to those interested in using the approach. This includes exploring some of the challenges that might face researchers when using qualitative diaries, as well as some potential ways to address these challenges. In order to more effectively illustrate these practical issues, I make reference to my own experiences of using qualitative diaries throughout. Towards the end of the chapter I briefly explore some of the new and potential future developments related to the use of technology in qualitative diary design, considering how this might revolutionise diary research of the future. Finally, the chapter concludes by highlighting how this methodological approach can help move management and organisation research forward by gaining fresh and original insights into important issues that affect people in the workplace on a daily basis.

PREVIOUS DIARY RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATIONS

Diaries have been used since the beginning of social research and are therefore not a new method as such. Take for instance the mining engineer and subsequent sociologist Frédéric

Le Play (1806–82) who collected information about family budgets in a diary of earnings and expenditures, expressing the family's life in figures (Seger, 1970, p. 181). Despite the aforementioned challenges of conducting research using diaries, researchers in the field of management who have utilised this method have achieved a variety of interesting findings.

Diaries can be qualitative or quantitative, or a mixture of both. To date the majority of diary studies conducted in this area have employed quantitative diaries, which consist of surveys completed by participants on a daily basis, or perhaps more regularly. Such diaries have been used to explore a variety of work-related issues including stress at work (Beattie & Griffin, 2014; Daniels & Harris, 2005; Daniels et al., 2009; Jones & Fletcher, 1996; Sonnentag, 2001), affective experiences at work along with subsequent behaviours (Beal & Ghandour, 2011; Ilies et al., 2006; Miner et al., 2005; Ouwenel et al., 2012; Weiss et al., 1999), workplace gossip (Waddington, 2005), fairness at work (Conway & Briner, 2002; Loi et al., 2009), job resources and work engagement (Bakker & Bal, 2010; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009), goal-setting (Claessens et al., 2010; König et al., 2010) and work-family spillover, conflict and facilitation (Butler et al., 2005; Derks & Bakker, 2014; Jones & Fletcher, 1996; Judge & Ilies, 2004), including across couples (Doumas et al., 2003; Ilies et al., 2007; Williams & Alliger, 1994). Such quantitative diaries provide a useful way of capturing the dynamic nature of daily experiences as they highlight daily changes, which other more retrospective techniques would be unlikely to recognise. The use of quantitative diaries has therefore received increasing attention in recent years, including being the core subject of text books in related fields (e.g. Mehl & Conner, 2010) reflecting the diary researchers' predominant focus on quantitative methods. However, because such diaries use self-report scales, each consisting of a small number of pre-defined items, they can overlook other important factors, neglecting valuable insights participants might have

to offer, and therefore limiting the potential in-depth findings that diary research has the capability of capturing.

Despite qualitative diaries being utilised much less frequently within the field of management and organisations, there are some notable exceptions, including qualitative diaries exploring stress at work (Clarkson & Hodgkinson, 2005), transient work patterns (Crozier & Cassell, 2015), organisational change (Balogun & Johnson, 2004), transfer of learning (Brown et al., 2011; Sadler-Smith & Shefy, 2007), gender and power in organisations (Plowman, 2010), work-family conflict decision-making (Radcliffe & Cassell, 2014), and experiences of flexible working (Poppleton et al., 2008; Radcliffe & Cassell, 2015). The use of such qualitative diaries to capture daily events and experiences is the focus of the remainder of the current chapter.

WHY USE QUALITATIVE DIARIES?

Authors across the organisation and management field have raised concerns that the most frequently used methods with management research cannot adequately capture the complexity of the numerous interactions that are essential to our understanding of organisations (e.g. Guest, 2011; Kiessling & Harvey, 2005). Everyday organisational realities are dynamic, existing within an uncertain and changeable world where moods, experiences and behaviours fluctuate daily, or perhaps more frequently (Ohly et al., 2010). It is this daily element that many frequently used data collection methods are less able to capture (Radcliffe, 2013). Qualitative diaries have the potential to offer several key benefits for management and organisational research; the ability to capture the specifics of events and processes, including thoughts, feelings, considerations and reactions; the ability to capture these events as they happen to avoid the problems associated with retrospect; and their

capacity to do this over numerous days therefore enabling a longitudinal research design. Such an approach can lead to the revelation of new and interesting insights and details that remain unnoticed when employing other methods of data collection. Beyond this, research has demonstrated that involvement in qualitative diary research can have therapeutic effects on participants (e.g. Suedfeld & Pennebaker, 1997). This section will explore each of these key benefits in greater depth.

Qualitative Diaries Enable a Detailed Exploration of Events, Experiences and Processes

Qualitative diaries allow researchers to explore events, experiences and processes within the natural and spontaneous context of daily life in a way that is not possible using more traditional methods (Reis, 1994). This approach, in conjunction with the qualitative nature of the research, allows participants to express their own perception of their experiences of a specific event without restriction, therefore providing the opportunity to uncover thoughts and feelings that have not previously been exposed, generating enormous amounts of detail which would be difficult to achieve using other methods (Symon, 2004). As mentioned earlier, diaries that have been employed in previous studies in this area (e.g. Butler et al., 2005; Doumas et al., 2003; Weiss et al., 1999; Williams & Alliger, 1994) tend to be quantitative; in other words they are surveys that are completed by participants on a daily basis, therefore losing their capacity to collect rich, in-depth data. Conversely, those studies that have utilised qualitative diaries have demonstrated how the rich, introspective data acquired from participants about their particular daily experiences, has led to important new insights.

For example, Plowman (2010) demonstrated the value of qualitative diaries within her research where staff and managers, within a case study organisation, were asked to

record their individual self-reflection of daily events in the workplace. Her findings from this application of the diary method affirmed the value of qualitative diaries for uncovering the internal workings of organisations by revealing what goes on in the unofficial organisational sphere, which would normally remain undiscovered. The use of qualitative diaries enabled her to achieve a deeper understanding of the meaning of 'gendered' organisational culture and consequently this enabled her to identify what needed to change within the organisation, as well as being able to support her suggestions with a clear rationale.

Within my own research exploring how dual-earner couples manage daily work-life conflict (Radcliffe & Cassell, 2014), taking a qualitative, episodic approach enabled the discovery of thought processes and concurrent feelings leading to, and predicting, the selection of particular strategies for dealing with these conflicts. One example of this was the negotiation of reciprocal arrangements with others, which involved building and maintaining agreements of mutual reciprocation both within couples and externally with other parents. This was predicted by the estimated ability to reciprocate and maintain such relationships equitably and was also stimulated by various emotions including stress and guilt. I would suggest that such depth of understanding regarding the complexity of how these strategies were (de)selected by participants would not have been possible using other, more traditional approaches to data collection.

Qualitative Diaries Take a Non-Retrospective Approach

The most consistently noted benefit of diary methods, both qualitative and quantitative, is the lesser time lapse that exists between event occurrence and event recording. An increasing body of literature from the cognitive sciences draws attention to the complexity of the recall process required when participants

are asked to respond to retrospective questions (e.g. Schwarz & Oyserman, 2001). Retrospection can lead to lapses in memory in terms of specific details of experiences, thoughts and feelings, to the degree that for some events, little useful or relevant information will be available to participants attempting to construct a response. In such instances, individuals might resort to drawing on personal theories or ideas regarding what they believe is likely to be the case (Christensen et al., 2003). There is also a propensity for state-congruent recall, where the participant's current mood or frame of mind leads them to draw on similar instances from the past, rather than drawing on instances that more accurately reflect their daily experiences, as well as recall of past events being distorted based on knowledge of subsequent event outcomes (Robinson & Clore, 2002).

When considering qualitative diaries specifically, this reduced retrospection offers the opportunity for as much detail as possible to be recalled and reported. This enhances the benefits of the approach by not only capturing the specifics, but by capturing as many of the specifics as possible, and in as much detail as possible, due to increased effectiveness of participant recall. A better recollection of thought processes and emotions attached to events, experiences and decisions is much more likely if these events are recorded as soon after they happen as possible (Bolger et al., 2003). By allowing participants to express their own perception of their experiences of a specific event or process freely, and with a lesser time lapse between the event occurrence and recording, qualitative diaries are able to uncover the previously undiscovered (Radcliffe, 2013).

The use of this approach in my own research (Radcliffe & Cassell, 2014) enabled the discovery of previously unrecognised factors that are important to participants when making decisions in incidents of work–family conflict (e.g. Powell & Greenhaus, 2006). For instance, participants frequently recalled making fairly intricate fairness judgements

regarding others when deciding how best to manage specific conflicts. This might include decisions to seek support from an available party being influenced by the amount of support they had already provided over a particular time period, their reaction to support-giving in the past, and their own personal circumstances at that particular time. Such considerations had not previously been explored in relation to work–family conflict (Radcliffe & Cassell, 2014). It is unlikely that these factors would have been recalled within an interview, at a time far removed from the actual event, as it is less likely that participants would be able to remember their exact thought processes at that time, as well as recalling all the influencing factors that led to a specific outcome (Radcliffe, 2013).

In this way, qualitative diaries offer not only the advantage of immediacy (Symon, 2004) offsetting the problems of retrospective accounts but also enabling recent events to be recalled in the kind of rich detail that permits new insights into complex phenomena (e.g. Poppleton et al., 2008; Radcliffe & Cassell, 2014, 2015).

Qualitative Diaries Permit a Longitudinal Element

Research has long shown that there is substantial variation in people's experiences on a daily basis, including their moods, experiences and interactions with others (e.g. Bolger et al., 1989; Eckenrode, 1984; van Eerde et al., 2005). Life in organisations is also far from static, consisting of events and behaviours that fluctuate in frequency and intensity over time (van Eerde et al., 2005). Rather than examining one specific occurrence at one specific point in time, the qualitative diary enables researchers to examine unfolding processes, within-person variations, and how individuals respond to changes in events or behaviours over time, therefore gaining rich insights into such regular fluctuations. In this way, they are able to capture context by

demonstrating the impact of past experiences on subsequent experiences. Taking events, feelings or decisions in isolation often gives an incomplete picture, therefore capturing immediate, and not so immediate, outcomes is important in terms of viewing the big picture. Outcomes can be thought of in two senses: the actual behavioural arrangement, or the subjective evaluation of those arrangements (Szinovacz, 1987). A within-person analysis over time, exploring both practical and emotional outcomes over numerous days, permitted by the qualitative diary method, can lead to deeper insights, particularly in terms of emotions and the impact that these emotions have on a person over time. The more in-depth recall of specific events and related feelings permit the mapping of the impact of such emotions on events on subsequent days.

For example, previous literature has highlighted mixed results regarding the benefits of flexible working. Some studies have reported that 'family-friendly' policies, such as flexible working arrangements, actually demonstrate positive relationships with family to work conflict (Hammer et al., 2005; Lapierre & Allen, 2006). Employing qualitative diaries, I also found that those who used flexible working experienced a greater number of conflict incidents (Radcliffe & Cassell, 2015); however, what previous studies have not shown is the longer-term daily impact on the employees themselves, and subsequently the organisation. My research demonstrated how a lack of flexibility can continue to be damaging after the event due to the constraints this puts on daily decision-making. Although a lack of flexibility at work often meant that participants were more likely to take part in the work domain, when faced with a work–family conflict, such constrained decision-making often led to further work–family conflicts. For example, one participant reported experiencing constraints placed upon her decision-making by an inflexible work context that prevented her from being able to start work at 10am rather than 9am on an occasion where she was required to work away from home. Her concern about

this situation continued to have a knock-on effect on both her work and personal life over the following days. The longitudinal nature of the qualitative diaries employed enabled the observation of the impact that imposing such constraints on decision-making can have over time. Beyond this, the necessity to continuously make decisions under such constraints was shown to lead to individuals leaving their organisation or intending to do so (Radcliffe & Cassell, 2015).

Specific events and experiences are inextricably linked to previous and subsequent events, and how these are experienced. Qualitative diaries provide an opportunity to capture and explore these links in a way that other methods cannot.

Positive Impact on Participants

Diaries can be used not only as a research tool but also as an intervention having the capacity to enable reflection and raise consciousness about the reported topic, allowing a deeper understanding and space for thinking and acting on change (Alford et al., 2005; Plowman, 2010). Self-reflection has been well-documented as having positive therapeutic outcomes, as well as being important for personal learning and development (e.g. Moon, 2013; Suedfeld & Pennebaker, 1997). The process of maintaining regular qualitative diary entries within research practice, permitting space for such personal reflection, has therefore been linked to therapeutic outcomes for individuals, due to this process of recollection and self-reflection (Milligan et al., 2005; Proff, 1992; Suedfeld & Pennebaker, 1997). Furthermore, it has also been linked to organisational learning and change (Symon, 2004).

Within my own research, participants expressed how the process of keeping a qualitative diary, 'made me think more about what I actually do' with some suggesting that it led to greater self-awareness such as enabling them to 'analyse my motives and realise that they are usually family orientated' and others

expressing greater awareness of their partner's roles and responsibilities, 'realising more what the demands are on each other'. For some participants, this led to decisions to change behaviour, such as one participant who worked from home realising that much of his stress emanated from trying to engage in work and home roles simultaneously: 'It causes stress doing something and then going back and checking my emails and then doing something so I'm not doing it anymore'. In this way, qualitative research diaries also have the potential to positively impact participants by encouraging self-reflection, self-awareness and subsequent learning, development and change.

CONDUCTING QUALITATIVE DIARY RESEARCH: POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AND PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

In this section I will outline some important considerations when employing the qualitative diary method, beginning with the design of the study, before considering recruitment of participants, maintaining participant commitment throughout the study, and finally discussing some relevant ethical issues. I will also draw on my own personal experiences of conducting qualitative diary studies, exploring how dual-earner couples experienced and resolved work–family conflict, as a way of offering useful practical examples. In doing this, I will address some potential challenges that researchers might face as well as making practical suggestions, with the aim of providing some guidance to researchers who are beginning their journey with qualitative diaries.

Designing the Qualitative Diary Study

Before beginning qualitative diary research, it is important to consider the design of the study as a whole, as well as the design of the diary itself. Such design considerations are

particularly important in the context of diary research to ensure that significant details are recorded in sufficient depth by participants. When using other, more frequently employed qualitative methods of data collection, such as the interview, the researcher is usually present throughout the duration of the data collection process. This enables them to ask and answer questions, prompt participants, or request a more detailed response where necessary. However, this is not the case during qualitative diary completion, as the researcher cannot be present throughout this process. In order to prevent the loss of important information, and to retain the detail and depth that the qualitative diary method has the potential to afford, the various design details of such research must be carefully considered.

Diary Study Design

Using diaries in conjunction with interviews has been considered, by various researchers, to be highly beneficial in terms of the quality of data collected (e.g. Plowman, 2010; Radcliffe, 2013). The diary-interview method was first described by Zimmerman and Wieder in 1977, where structured diaries were designed to record daily interactions and were followed by an in-depth and intensive interview reviewing and exploring each aspect of the diary in order to gain additional details, as well as to check the internal consistency of diary entries (Toms & Duff, 2002). In this way, Zimmerman and Wieder (1977) suggested that the follow-up interview should focus on expanding what was reported in the diaries in order to ascertain further details, as well as to uncover the meaning and significance of what was recorded. Incorporating such follow-up interviews in the design of diary studies therefore provides opportunities to clarify and discuss in more detail the issues raised in the diaries. Beyond this, when using qualitative diaries, which encourage

participants to engage in reflection over time, it is good practice to discuss impact with participants. Follow-up interviews also offer an opportunity to do this; to discuss what impact, if any, keeping the diaries has had on participants.

Plowman (2010) refers to the diary-interview process as 'the diary project' making reference to the idea that initial briefings and follow-up interviews are usually considered to be important elements of qualitative diary research. Initial interviews prior to diary completion are an opportunity to discuss the research with participants in person, provide them with the opportunity to ask questions, and ensure that they have a clear and specific understanding regarding specifically what they are expected to report, and in how much detail. Detailed instructions, including a clear definition of triggering events where appropriate, are essential, because any ambiguities may cause participants to omit relevant information and detail (Bolger et al., 2003).

For example, in my own research, I used the initial interviews to emphasise the importance of recording minor and routine work-family conflicts, including the discussion of specific examples, to emphasise the amount of detail required in their entries. As part of this initial interview I employed the critical incident technique (Chell, 2004) asking interviewees to recall a recently experienced work-family conflict incident. This provided me with the opportunity to talk through this incident with participants, identifying their decision-making process and any impacting factors, and encouraging them to express the level of detail that I was looking for them to record within their future diary entries. This allowed me to make clear links between this discussion and their recording of such incidents in their diaries, therefore enabling participants to understand the type of incidents that should be recorded, as well as the importance of including adequate detail in terms of their decision-making process and all the factors involved.

Designing the Diary

In order to encourage effective recording, it is also important to consider the design of the diary carefully. There are three general categories of diary methods in the literature (Eckenrode & Bolger, 1995; Rönkä et al., 2010). These are:

- 1 Interval-contingent, where experiences are recorded at regular, predetermined intervals of time;
- 2 Signal-contingent, where participants report experiences whenever they are contacted by the researcher;
- 3 Event-contingent, where participants report every time a pre-established event takes place.

Considerations regarding which of these is most appropriate for any particular research must, of course, be based on the research aims of that particular study. For instance, within my research, I employed an event-contingent schedule, as this made most sense given that the purpose of the research was to explore specific work-family conflict incidents, since providing reports at fixed times each day would not ensure that a specific incident had occurred and could be reported.

A related issue, when considering the design of qualitative diaries, is how much structure, if any, to incorporate. It is important to focus the research, drawing a line around what will, and will not, be investigated within a particular study. However, considering one of the aims of utilising a qualitative approach is to permit expression of participant experiences and perceptions, imposing a structure onto participants which is not their own should be avoided. Keeping diaries unstructured prevents participant's discussions being confined, in any way, by the researcher's preconceived ideas, an important benefit of utilising qualitative, rather than quantitative, diaries.

Conversely, participants faced with a blank page may feel daunted, particularly those who have not written for a significant period of time, whereas the inclusion of a number of

open-ended questions can make diary completion more efficient and straightforward (Radcliffe, 2013; Toms & Duff, 2002). It is also important that the diary is designed in a way that encourages the reporting of as much relevant information as possible and there is the danger that less focused diary structures may lead to participants recording fewer relevant events (Johnson & Bytheway, 2001; Radcliffe, 2013). For instance, when pilot testing an unstructured/ blank diary, along with a semi-structured diary containing four open-ended questions, my participants explained that without the prompts of the semi-structured diary, they 'would just have written what happened, and not any feelings or why'. They also commented that they 'did think about it more' when completing the semi-structured diary. As a result, I employed a semi-structured diary but with an additional blank space for participants to record any details that did not fit within the four daily questions but that they considered to be relevant and important. In this way, pilot studies are particularly useful when designing qualitative research diaries, as they allow for the consideration of the structure most effective for the particular aims of the research.

As well as considering the most effective and appropriate structure for qualitative diary design, there are also a variety of mediums that can be utilised for diary reporting including traditional paper and pencil diaries, diaries completed electronically and sent via email, audio diaries (e.g. Boyd et al., 2004; Crozier & Cassell, 2015), video diaries (e.g. Gibson, 2008), and the more recent development of smartphone diary apps (e.g. Chong et al., 2014). Paper and pencil diaries are still the most commonly used diary medium, as some authors claim that they are the easiest for participants to use (Bolger et al., 2003). However, as technology capabilities continue to develop at a rapid pace, increasing benefits of more modern diary mediums are being recognised (Green et al., 2006). Such technological advancement, and their potential

implications for qualitative diary research, will be discussed later in this chapter.

When considering the most appropriate and effective diary medium to utilise in a particular research study, in order to further facilitate regular and detailed responses, it might be useful to provide participants with the opportunity to select from a variety of options therefore enabling them to select the approach that is most comfortable and convenient for them personally. For example, the use of a diary format heavily reliant upon technology may be difficult and less than comfortable for participants who are not used to using technology, whereas other participants who utilise technology readily within their daily lives might find diary reporting much easier and more convenient using such mediums. Therefore, where possible, considering providing participants with the option to select from diary mediums such as traditional paper and pen, electronic, audio or even mobile diaries, is likely to enhance commitment to the study and therefore continued detailed recordings over time. Issues surrounding participant commitment will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

Recruiting Participants and Maintaining Commitment to the Study

One of the biggest challenges of using qualitative diaries is recruiting willing participants, and subsequently maintaining the level of participant commitment and dedication required to successfully complete regular diary entries over a prolonged period of time. As such a level of commitment is rarely required in other types of research (Bolger et al., 2003), the challenge of finding participants willing to commit to being involved in such research is one of the first real hurdles that researchers are likely to encounter. Agreement to take part is most likely to occur if personal contact with the researcher, or with others who are already involved in

the research, is already somewhat established (Bolger et al., 2003; Radcliffe, 2013). Snowball sampling can work particularly effectively, as participants who are already taking part in the research can recommend relevant others with whom they will then share their own knowledge of the experience of being involved. This can encourage others based on the positive experiences of current participants engaged with the research, as well as providing them with an opportunity to ask existing participants questions about the process.

This also provides a further rationale for qualitative diaries being utilised as part of research strategy involving other methods, which enable initial face to face contact between the researcher and participants to establish and build rapport. It might be that interviews, for example, can be the initial step in a research process, where participants subsequently have the opportunity to take part in additional research elements, should they be happy to do so. Here researchers have the opportunity to explain the purpose and importance of the research, as well as any potential benefits, directly to the participant, as well as to address any initial concerns that participants might have about taking part. Downplaying the commitments required might be tempting when trying to recruit participants for qualitative diary research; however, it is important to be transparent from the beginning, not only ethically, but also in order to decrease the likelihood of participants dropping out of the research later (Radcliffe, 2013).

Once participants have been recruited, maintaining commitment to the research becomes the next challenge. Without the continued presence of the researcher, it is quite possible that forgetfulness, lapses in participant motivation, as well as external constraints to diary completion, may occur. It is therefore necessary for a high level of commitment to be maintained throughout, and for the research to remain in the minds of participants if they are to complete

the type of substantive daily diary entries required to ensure the effectiveness of qualitative diary research. When diaries are not completed on time this not only slows down the process of data collection and analysis but can also lead to concern that participants resort to completing diaries in retrospect, which can potentially undermine one of the key benefits of using the diary method; the minimisation of effects of retrospection on recall of daily experiences. This is referred to as 'backfilling' (Piasecki et al., 2007), where participants might potentially even resort to recording numerous diary entries on the final completion day, immediately before they are to be returned to the researcher.

As a means of addressing this problem, it is especially important to maintain contact with participants throughout the period of diary completion. Previous research has highlighted that 'personal contact retains participants more so than monetary incentives or dependence upon goodwill towards science' (Bolger et al., 2003, p. 595). It is therefore important to contact participants regularly during diary completion to ensure any concerns are raised by providing further opportunity to ask questions. This helps to ensure that issues are dealt with as they occur as well as preventing loss of data due to misunderstandings or disillusionment with the study. Prior to the commencement of the diary study it can be useful to agree with participants how they would like to be contacted during this period with the hope of avoiding, or at least minimising, the disruption to their daily lives (Radcliffe, 2013). During my own research, I contacted participants via telephone, text or email, depending upon preference, several times during the four-week period to provide the opportunity for further questions and to make sure they were happy to continue.

Another useful strategy is to agree exactly when and how diaries entries should be made. Some modern electronic diaries have signalling features with the ability to

inform participants of when to record an entry, which can be useful where researchers can employ signal-contingent, or even interval-contingent, design into their study. Such technological advancements will be considered in further detail within the following section. However, if participants are being asked to report events as they occur, these signalling features are less likely to be useful. In such 'event-based' studies, it should be considered whether or not it is reasonable to ask participants to report an incident in their diaries immediately after the event has occurred. This can often be unrealistic; therefore, a more realistic approach might be to allow participants to postpone responding until a more opportune moment. A discussion regarding when participants would complete their diaries during an initial interview or meeting, along with encouragement to report events as soon as possible, can help to reduce fabrication due to highly retrospective accounts. For instance, Symon (2004) suggests that a participant regularly completing their diary on the train on the way home from work was free from distractions, therefore producing concise, diary entries that were consistently recorded at the same time each day. It can also be helpful to ask participants to record the date and time of their diary entries, as well as an approximate time of the event to which they are referring, or to note how much time has passed between the event and the recording. This not only gives researchers a clearer picture of the degree of retrospection within the account, but may also encourage participants to make greater efforts to record their experiences as close to the event as possible.

Considering Ethical Issues

From a researcher's perspective, when qualitative diaries fulfil their potential in terms of leading to the exposing and reflection of in-depth personal issues and insights, this is

extremely beneficial in terms of the rich data that can be attained. As previously discussed, there may also be potential benefits for participants in terms of enabling reflection, personal development and change. However, this can also heighten ethical issues with regards to the impact that such in-depth reflection could have on participants, particularly if the topic under discussion is of a personal and sensitive nature. Such issues are further enhanced when the researcher considers conducting follow-up interviews with participants after reading personal disclosures within their diaries.

As previously mentioned, follow-up interviews can often be an important element of the qualitative diary method as they provide vital opportunities to clarify and discuss, in more detail, the issues raised in the diaries, in order to gain a more complete and in-depth understanding. However, bringing emotive issues to the surface can potentially have a negative impact on participants' emotional state (Corbin & Morse, 2003) and, in some cases, where sensitive issues and conflicts arise, it may not be ethical to raise the topic in the follow-up interview. Some authors have chosen not to conduct follow-up interviews because of such issues, deciding instead to only undertake single interviews (e.g. Gatrell, 2009). As qualitative researchers, it is vital that we prioritise the interests of participants above our own desire to collect data and, in accordance with this, ethical guidelines iterate the need for researchers to protect participants from potentially harmful effects of qualitative research interviews (e.g. British Psychological Society, 2010). Subsequent follow-up interviews should be conducted with careful consideration regarding whether it is appropriate to raise issues that could potentially cause harm to participants. The medium through which follow-up interviews are conducted could also be considered here, in terms of those which permit some degree of personal distancing for participants, such as via telephone (Gatrell, 2009; Radcliffe, 2013).

THE FUTURE OF QUALITATIVE DIARY RESEARCH: CONSIDERING NEW TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

As a result of the increasing application of technology within research projects, debates have begun to emerge in the literature regarding the most effective tools for conducting diary research (Green et al., 2006). Such debate regarding innovation in diary design has also been stimulated by the greater potential to assist in maintaining participant commitment, encouraging continued regular responses. Technology-based mediums for collecting participant responses have been discussed as potentially being more reliable than paper and pencil approaches (e.g. Green et al., 2006; Mehl & Conner, 2012).

Currently, personal digital assistants (PDAs), hand held computers presenting custom-designed questions, are the platform most widely used to collect diary entries electronically. Database software permitting researchers to design diaries using PDA platforms can now be readily purchased (see Mehl & Conner, 2012). However, custom-designed PDA-based diaries are likely to be too cost prohibitive for smaller scale research projects (Piasecki et al., 2007), and more importantly, at present, the use of such programmes has been focused on quantitative diary formats (e.g. Barrett & Feldman Barrett, 2000). Therefore, their feasibility for incorporating open-ended responses required for qualitative diaries currently remains difficult, yet perhaps there is room for adaptation in the future.

Diary data may also be collected via the internet by creating online diaries, providing participants with the relevant web-link and passwords, and asking them to log on to complete their diaries. Such online diaries have the advantage of centralised data collection (Piasecki et al., 2007), meaning that data cannot be lost, or found by others, in the same way as might be possible when using PDAs if they are lost or broken. However, such methods require participants to have access

to a computer that is connected to the internet in order to complete their diary entry, which may be inconvenient (Anhøj & Nielsen, 2004). Greater potential may exist for those online diaries that can be created specifically for use on mobile phones or tablets.

Considering the potential created by the extensive use of smartphones by the public also provides possibilities in terms of 'diary apps' that can be easily accessed by participants as they are 'on the go'. This is an area that as yet remains fairly underutilised, particularly in terms of qualitative diary research, but offers great future potential. One example of such innovations is research by the Digital Brain Switch team who have created 'squeeze diaries' where participants are given a squeeze sensor that can be squeezed for a short duration to trigger an event instance in the related smart phone app (Chong et al., 2014). The instance is then logged (along with relevant cues, such as location and time) on the mobile phone allowing the user to record a qualitative reflection on the recorded instance, at a more convenient time. There are clearly issues of cost and programming here, as well as extra time needed for training participants on how to use these devices. While some may be very familiar with such technology, others could be less comfortable. However, it certainly does offer interesting and fruitful possibilities for innovative diary studies moving forward, which could help to address some of the aforementioned challenges of qualitative diary research.

CONCLUSION

This chapter highlights the numerous benefits of using diaries, particularly qualitative diaries, as part of management and organisations research. It also explores some of the practical considerations required when designing qualitative diary research, including addressing some of the associated challenges. Although the use of the qualitative diary method can entail numerous challenges, it is

argued here that the benefits far outweigh the difficulties and, in this respect, perseverance and determination are advocated due to the rewards that this method affords.

Using qualitative diaries enables the in-depth exploration of everyday situations therefore increasing our understanding of experiences, events and processes from the perspectives of various individuals, permitting within- and between-person analyses of detailed descriptions of experiences. In my own personal experience, using qualitative diaries enabled novel findings due to the substantial amount of detail attained using a non-retrospective, episodic and longitudinal approach, permitting participants to record their own perception of experiences freely and as they happened. Beyond this, the use of qualitative diaries enabled thoughts and emotional experiences to be captured at the time of event occurrence, the details of which could otherwise have been lost or diluted using more retrospective techniques (Symon, 2004). The longitudinal nature of qualitative diaries also offers insights into the impact that both practical and emotional outcomes, experienced at a particular time or on a particular day, can have on subsequent experiences, thoughts, feelings and actions in the future. Such findings can throw new light on important workplace issues, enabling new insights into complex daily experiences and processes. When considering these substantial benefits, in terms of the rich understanding of organisational issues that have the potential to be uncovered using qualitative diaries, it can only be argued that qualitative diaries are extremely useful tools for researchers looking to add new and valuable contributions to the management and organisations field.

FURTHER READING

Radcliffe, L.S. (2013). Qualitative diaries: Uncovering the complexities of work-life decision-making. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 8(2), 163–80.

Symon, G. (2004) Qualitative research diaries. In C. Cassell and G. Symon (Eds.) *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*, (pp. 98–113). Sage.

REFERENCES

- Alford, W.K., Malouff, J.M., & Osland, K.S. (2005). Written emotional expression as a coping method in child protective services officers. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 12(2), 177–87.
- Anhøj, J., & Nielsen, L. (2004). Quantitative and qualitative usage data of an Internet-based asthma monitoring tool. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 6(3), e23.
- Bakker, A.B., & Bal, P.M. (2010). Weekly work engagement and performance: A study among starting teachers. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 83(1), 189–206.
- Balogun, J., & Johnson, G. (2004). Organizational restructuring and middle manager sensemaking. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47(4), 523–49.
- Barrett, D.J., & Feldman Barrett, L. (2000). *The Experience-Sampling Program (ESP)*. [Online] Available from: www2.bc.edu/%7Ebarrettli/esp/
- Beal, D.J., & Ghandour, L. (2011). Stability, change, and the stability of change in daily workplace affect. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 32(4), 526–46.
- Beattie, L., & Griffin, B. (2014). Accounting for within-person differences in how people respond to daily incivility at work. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 87(3), 625–44.
- Bolger, N., Davis, A., & Rafaeli, E. (2003). Diary methods: Capturing life as it is lived. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 54, 579–616.
- Bolger, N., DeLongis, A., Kessler, R.C., & Schilling, E.A. (1989). Effects of daily stress on negative mood. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57(5), 808–18.
- Boyd, D., Egbu, C., Chinyio, E., Xiao, H., & Lee, CCT. (2004). Audio diary and debriefing for knowledge management in SMEs, *ARCOM 20th Annual Conference*, 1–3 Sept 2004, Heriot Watt University, UK, 741–7.

- British Psychological Society (2010). *Code of Human Research Ethics*, available at: www.bps.org.uk
- Brown, T., McCracken, M., & O'Kane, P. (2011). 'Don't forget to write': How reflective learning journals can help to facilitate, assess and evaluate training transfer. *Human Resource Development International*, 14(4), 465–81.
- Butler, A.B., Grzywacz, J.G., Bass, B.L., & Linney, K.D. (2005). Extending the demands-control model: A daily diary study of job characteristics, work-family conflict and work-family facilitation. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 78(2), 155–70.
- Casper, W.J., Eby, L.T., Bordeaux, C., Lockwood, A., & Lambert, D. (2007). A review of research methods in IO/OB work-family research. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(1), 28–43.
- Chell, E. (2004). Critical incident technique. In C.M. Cassell and G. Symon (Eds.) *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*, (pp. 45–60). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Chong, M.K., Whittle, J., Rashid, U., Ang, C.S., Whiting, R., Roby, H., Chamakiotis, P., & Symon, G. (2014). *Methods for Monitoring Work-Life Balance in a Digital World*. Conference paper presented at Socio-Technical Practices and Work-Home Boundaries Workshop at MobileHCI 2014, 23–26 September, Toronto, Ontario: Canada.
- Christensen, T.C., Wood, J.V., & Barrett, L.F. (2003). Remembering everyday experience through the prism of self-esteem. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 29(1), 51–62.
- Claessens, B.J., van Eerde, W., Rutte, C.G., & Roe, R.A. (2010). Things to do today...: A daily diary study on task completion at work. *Applied Psychology*, 59(2), 273–95.
- Clarkson, G.P., & Hodgkinson, G.P. (2007). What can occupational stress diaries achieve that questionnaires can't? *Personnel Review*, 36(5), 684–700.
- Conway, N., & Briner, R.B. (2002). A daily diary study of affective responses to psychological contract breach and exceeded promises. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 23(3), 287–302.
- Corbin, J., & Morse, J.M. (2003). The unstructured interactive interview: Issues of reciprocity and risks when dealing with sensitive topics. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(3), 335–54.
- Crozier, S.E., & Cassell, C.M. (2015). Methodological considerations in the use of audio diaries in work psychology: Adding to the qualitative toolkit. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 89(2), 396–419.
- Daniels, K., Boocock, G., Glover, J., Hartley, R., & Holland, J. (2009). An experience sampling study of learning, affect, and the demands control support model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94(4), 1003–17.
- Daniels, K., & Harris, C. (2005). A daily diary study of coping in the context of the job demands-control-support model. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 66(2), 219–37.
- Derks, D., & Bakker, A.B. (2014). Smartphone use, work-home interference, and burnout: A diary study on the role of recovery. *Applied Psychology*, 63(3), 411–40.
- Doumas, D.M., Margolin, G. & John, R.S. (2003). The relationship between daily marital interaction, work, and health-promoting behaviors in dual-earner couples: An extension of the work-family spillover model. *Journal of Family Issues*, 24(1), 3–20.
- Eckenrode, J. (1984). Impact of chronic and acute stressors on daily reports of mood. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46(4), 907–18.
- Eckenrode, J., & Bolger, N. (1995). Daily and within-day event measurement. In S. Cohen, R.C. Kessler, & L.U. Gordon (Eds.) *Measuring Stress: A Guide for Health and Social Scientists* (pp. 80–101). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gatrell, C. (2009). Safeguarding subjects? A reflexive appraisal of researcher accountability in qualitative interviews. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 4(2), 110–22.
- Gibson, B.E. (2008). Co-producing video diaries: The presence of the 'absent' researcher. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 4(4), 34–43.
- Green, A.S., Rafaeli, E., Bolger, N., Shrout, P.E., & Reis, H.T. (2006). Paper or plastic? Data

- equivalence in paper and electronic diaries. *Psychological Methods*, 11(1), 87–105.
- Guest, D.E. (2011). Human resource management and performance: Still searching for some answers. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 21(1), 3–13.
- Hammer, L.B., Neal, M.B., Newsom, J., Brockwood, K.J., & Colton, C. (2005). A longitudinal study of the effects of dual-earner couples' utilization of family-friendly workplace supports on work and family outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(4), 799–810.
- Hofmans, J., Judge, T.A., Roe, R.A., & Vantilbough, T. (2016). Special issue call for papers: Capturing dynamics at work. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*.
- Ilies, R., Schwind, K.M., Wagner, D.T., Johnson, M.D., DeRue, D.S., & Ilgen, D.R. (2007). When can employees have a family life? The effects of daily workload and affect on work–family conflict and social behaviors at home. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(5), 1368–79.
- Ilies, R., Scott, B.A., & Judge, T.A. (2006). The interactive effects of personal traits and experienced states on intraindividual patterns of citizenship behavior. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49(3), 561–75.
- Johnson, J., & Bytheway, B. (2001). An evaluation of the use of diaries in a study of medication in later life. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 4(3), 183–204.
- Johnson, P., & Duberley, J. (2003). Reflexivity in management research. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(5), 1279–303.
- Jones, F., & Fletcher, B.C. (1996). Taking work home: A study of daily fluctuations in work stressors, effects on moods and impacts on marital partners. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 69(1), 89–106.
- Judge, T.A., & Ilies, R. (2004). Affect and job satisfaction: A study of their relationship at work and at home. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89(4), 661–73.
- Kiessling, T., & Harvey, M. (2005). Strategic global human resource management research in the twenty-first century: An endorsement of the mixed-method research methodology. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 16(1), 22–45.
- König, C.J., van Eerde, W., & Burch, A. (2010). Predictors and consequences of daily goal adaptation: A diary study. *Journal of Personnel Psychology*, 9(1), 50–6.
- Lapierre L.M. & Allen T.D. (2006). Work-supportive family, family-supportive supervision, use of organizational benefits, and problem-focused coping: Implications for work–family conflict and employee well-being. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 11(2), 169–81.
- Loi, R., Yang, J., & Diefendorff, J.M. (2009). Four-factor justice and daily job satisfaction: a multilevel investigation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94(3), 770–81.
- Maertz, C.P. Jr., & Boyar, S.L. (2011). Work–family conflict, enrichment, and balance under 'levels' and 'episodes' approaches. *Journal of Management*, 37(1), 68–98.
- Mehl, M.R. and Conner, T.S. (2012). *Handbook of Research Methods for Studying Daily Life*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Milligan, C., Bingley, A., & Gatrell, A. (2005). Digging deep: Using diary techniques to explore the place of health and well-being amongst older people. *Social Science & Medicine*, 61(9), 1882–92.
- Miner, A., Glomb, T., & Hulin, C. (2005). Experience sampling mood and its correlates at work. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 78(2), 171–93.
- Moon, J.A. (2013). *Reflection in Learning and Professional Development: Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge.
- Nadin, S., & Cassell, C. (2006). The use of a research diary as a tool for reflexive practice: Some reflections from management research. *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management*, 3(3), 208–17.
- Ohly, S., Sonntag, S., Niessen, C., & Zapf, D. (2010). Diary studies in organizational research: An introduction and some practical recommendations. *Journal of Personnel Psychology*, 9(2), 79–93.
- Ouweneel, E., Le Blanc, P.M., Schaufeli, W.B., & van Wijhe, C.I. (2012). Good morning, good day: A diary study on positive emotions, hope, and work engagement. *Human Relations*, 65(9), 1129–54.

- Piasecki, T.M., Hufford, M.R., Solhan, M., & Trull, T.J. (2007). Assessing clients in their natural environments with electronic diaries: Rationale, benefits, limitations, and barriers. *Psychological Assessment, 19*(1), 25–43.
- Plowman, P.J. (2010). The diary project: Revealing the gendered organisation. *Qualitative Research in Organisations and Management: An International Journal, 5*(1), 28–46.
- Poppleton, S., Briner, R.B. & Kiefer, T. (2008). The roles of context and everyday experience in understanding work-non-work relationships: A qualitative diary study of white- and blue-collar workers. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 81*(3), 481–502.
- Powell, G.N. & J.H. Greenhaus (2006). Managing incidents of work–family conflict: A decision-making perspective. *Human Relations, 59*(9), 1179–1212.
- Progoff, I. (1992). *At a Journal Workshop: Writing to Access the Power of the Unconscious and Evoke Creative Ability*. New York: Tarcher.
- Radcliffe, L.S. (2013). Qualitative diaries: Uncovering the complexities of work-life decision-making. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, 8*(2), 163–80.
- Radcliffe, L.S., & Cassell, C. (2014). Resolving couples' work–family conflicts: The complexity of decision making and the introduction of a new framework. *Human Relations, 67*(7), 793–819.
- Radcliffe, L.S., & Cassell, C. (2015). Flexible working, work–family conflict, and maternal gatekeeping: The daily experiences of dual-earner couples. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 88*(4), 835–55.
- Reis, H.T. (1994). Domains of experience: Investigating relationship processes from three perspectives. In: R. Erber and R. Gilmour, *Theoretical Frameworks for Personal Relationships*, pp. 87–110. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Robinson, M.D., & Clore, G.L. (2002). Episodic and semantic knowledge in emotional self-report: Evidence for two judgment processes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 83*(1), 198–215.
- Roe, R.A. (2008). Time in applied psychology. The study of 'what happens' rather than 'what is'. *European Psychologist, 13*(1), 37–52.
- Rönkä, A., Malinen, K., Kinnunen, U., Tolvanen, A., & Lämsä, T. (2010). Capturing daily family dynamics via text messages: Development of the mobile diary. *Community, Work & Family, 13*(1), 5–21.
- Sadler-Smith, E., & Shefy, E. (2007). Developing intuitive awareness in management education. *Academy of Management Learning & Education, 6*(2), 186–205.
- Schwarz, N., & Oyserman, D. (2001). Asking questions about behavior: Cognition, communication, and questionnaire construction. *American Journal of Evaluation, 22*(2), 127–60.
- Sonnentag, S. (2001). Work, recovery activities, and individual well-being: A diary study. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 6*(3), 196–210.
- Spector, P.E., & Meier, L.L. (2014). Methodologies for the study of organizational behavior processes: How to find your keys in the dark. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 35*(8), 1109–19.
- Suedfeld, P., & Pennebaker, J.W. (1997). Health outcomes and cognitive aspects of recalled negative life events. *Psychosomatic Medicine, 59*(2), 172–7.
- Symon, G. (2004). Qualitative research diaries. In C. Cassell and G. Symon (Eds.) *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*, (pp. 98–113). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Szinovacz, M.E. (1987). Family power. In M.B. Sussman and S.K. Steinmetz (Eds.) *Handbook of Marriage and the Family*, pp. 651–93. New York: Plenum Press.
- Toms, E.G., & Duff, W. (2002). 'I spent 1½ hours sifting through one large box...': Diaries as information behavior of the archives user – Lessons learned. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 53*(14), 1232–8.
- Travers, C. (2011). Unveiling a reflective diary methodology for exploring the lived experiences of stress and coping. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 79*(1), 204–16.
- van Eerde, W., Holman, D., & Totterdell, P. (2005). Editorial: Special section on diary studies in work psychology. *Journal of*

- Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 78(2), 151–4.
- Waddington, K. (2005). Using diaries to explore the characteristics of work-related gossip: Methodological considerations from exploratory multimethod research. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 78(2), 221–36.
- Weiss, H.M., Nicholas, J.P., & Daus, C.S. (1999). An examination of the joint effects of affective experiences and job beliefs on job satisfaction and variations in affective experiences over time. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 78(1), 1–24.
- Williams, K.J., & Alliger, G.M. (1994). Role stressors, mood spillover, and perceptions of work-family conflict in employed parents. *Academy of Management Journal*, 37(4), 837–68.
- Xanthopoulou, D., Bakker, A.B., Demerouti, E., & Schaufeli, W.B. (2009). Work engagement and financial returns: A diary study on the role of job and personal resources. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 82(1), 183–200.
- Zimmerman, D.H., & Wieder, D.L. (1977). The diary: Diary-interview method. *Urban Life*, 5(4), 479–98.

Going with the Flow: Shadowing in Organisations

Seonaidh McDonald

INTRODUCTION

In 1997 I undertook my first shadowing in an organisation. I had already been researching the organisation with a team of colleagues for more than a year. Despite the fact that I had already spent many long weeks in the organisation, travelling to all their sites in the UK, interviewing over 100 individuals, observing hours and hours of meetings and taking part in project feedback sessions for middle and senior management, nothing prepared me for the shadowing data. It is well documented that shadowing is a physically and mentally exhausting process (see, for example, Gill et al., 2014; Urban & Quinlan, 2014) and at first I thought it was this, and the richness of the torrent of data that was unleashed that was what made the experience so different. However, as the weeks passed, I began to realise that I was ‘seeing’ the organisation in a new way. That the data I was collecting were somehow different than the data I had collected before. This shed new

light for me on the limitations of other methods and started a process of trying to articulate these subtle and slippery differences to myself and to others.

I began by ransacking the literature. When I couldn’t find what I was looking for to explain my new insights to myself in the research methods literature, I started to look in wider and wider circles, including more and more disciplines. In Education (Earley & Bubb, 2013; Polite et al., 1997; Roan & Rooney, 2006; Wolcott, 1973) and in Nursing studies (Frandsen, 2010; Johansen & Forberg, 2011; Vukic & Keddy, 2002) I found glimpses of similarity with what I had done, but their natural acceptance that shadowing was a legitimate approach and their descriptions of shadowing didn’t help me, beyond reassuring me that shadowing was being conducted elsewhere. This extended review process also helped me to see that what I called shadowing was actually called different things in different literatures and that what other people called shadowing often wasn’t the same as

what I had done at all. I found a raft of studies where, like me, researchers had followed organisational actors around over the course of their working days, but noticed that sometimes their methodological focus was on the co-constructed narratives developed between researcher and organisational actor (see, for example, Dewilde & Creese's (2016) discursive shadowing), and sometimes on the perspective created by the movement itself (see, for example, Evans & Jones' (2011) walking interviews). I found shadowing studies where the focus of the researcher was not on actors at all. Some have taken physical objects as the focus for their shadowing. Bruni (2005), for example, shadows patient records as they move physically through a hospital as well as through the hands of many organisational actors and are subject to, and simultaneously produced by, its organising processes. Other studies shadow less tangible objects, such as organisational policies. Gehman et al.'s (2013) study of how honour codes develop within organisations included 'shadowing the honor code in action' (p. 88) in a department of a large public university as one of their data collection strategies. I began to understand shadowing as a family of following methods, rather than a single data collection technique.

I found that shadowing in organisations had a long and distinguished history in my own discipline, going back to Mintzberg (1973) who collected both qualitative and quantitative data whilst following managers around. The qualitative element of this work had been somewhat forgotten, whilst the quantitative element became structured observation (Mintzberg, 1970). The qualitative work emerges later in the work of Barbara Czarniawska (2007) who took her inspiration from a more European tradition of organisational behaviour research (Sclavi, 2007). Czarniawska's work focuses on the need for new data collection techniques to keep up with the accelerated pace and new forms of organising, and sees shadowing as

part of that arsenal of approaches that are becoming more necessary.

The rise of shadowing may also be due in part to changes in the academy. The twin pressures of reduced research funding and the increased publication rates necessary for both institutions and individuals to survive in the academic marketplace have made some of the traditional techniques of sociology and anthropology less attractive. There is neither the time (in terms of either diaries or careers) nor the funding available for researchers to undertake long-term, open-ended ethnographic study of organisations (Cooren et al., 2008; Couldry, 2003; Kostera 2007). Shadowing supplies a way of evidencing some of the research questions associated with an ethnographic view of the organisation in a more focused, faster paced way and this may be one reason for interest in these approaches growing in recent years.

When I started gathering literature on shadowing as a research method and reviewing studies that had used shadowing approaches, I thought that it was an uncommon technique. Through my reading and through the community of shadowers I have come to know over the intervening years, I realise that I was quite wrong. There is evidence of shadowing approaches to data collection across the social sciences. However, perhaps because the precise nature of the difference between these approaches and their better known sister techniques is so hard to articulate, what *is* lacking is a literature to explain them in detail and examine them critically (Bartkowiak-Theron & Sappey, 2012; Quinlan, 2008). What follows then is not a description of how to shadow (see Czarniawska, 2007 instead) or a catalogue of the different types of shadowing, and their purposes (McDonald, 2005; Meunier & Vásquez, 2008). In this chapter I will set out some of the methodological and epistemological characteristics of shadowing and the extent to which these are shared by and distinct from other qualitative data

collection techniques. I do this with the aim of demonstrating ways in which shadowing approaches can contribute to both specific debates within, and the general development of, organisation studies.

The data gathered by shadowing techniques are in many ways very similar to those that can be surfaced through other qualitative research methods in terms of the physical form they take, the data streams they access and the methods that can be used to analyse them. For an example of shadowing data and a discussion of how they differ in form from data gathered by other common data collection techniques, see McDonald and Simpson (2014). Shadowing data contain observational data about the setting and norms within an organisation, in much the same way that an observation study would. They include the opinions and beliefs of the individuals within the organisation, just as a study based on a series of interviews would. They also incorporate a stream of researcher reactions to the unfolding organisational action that would be easily recognised by any participant observer. However, in shadowing, these data streams are both distinct and concurrent. As these data are elicited all at once, they have different (inter)relationships to each other than the same data elicited through three separate studies would have. At the very least, shadowing records two points of view that are simultaneously moving through organisational time and space. Bartkowiak-Theron and Sappey (2012) suggest that shadowing is in itself a multiple method. This is an interesting proposition with implications for various forms of triangulation.

These similarities with other data collection techniques and the data they produce can make it hard to conceptualise the subtle differences and therefore articulate the unique contribution that shadowing approaches can make. In the sections that follow I will focus discussion on some of the salient characteristics of shadowing in order to form a picture of how shadowing approaches and shadowing

data are similar to, but also how they are different from, other research methods. In particular I will consider:

- voice and perspective;
- relationship with the research context and the organisational actor;
- movement and real time; and
- interruption of organisation.

I will both draw on organisational theories and suggest ways in which different kinds of organisational inquiry can be facilitated through shadowing approaches.

I will conclude that shadowing approaches are not entirely distinct from other techniques used to collect data in organisations. They share a range of characteristics at the level of practice, methodology and epistemology with other qualitative organisational research methods. However, what makes shadowing approaches different is the unique way in which those characteristics are combined. These fresh combinations of methodological attributes allow an active, explicit, reflexive and dynamic co-production of situated organisational knowledge by the shadower and the organisational actor she follows.

VOICE AND PERSPECTIVE: A THEORY OF NARRATOLOGY

One of the aspects of the data gathered through shadowing that feels different from other qualitative approaches is the relationship between the voice of the researcher and the voice of the organisational actor. If shadowing is essentially two points of view simultaneously moving through organisational time and space, then this has implications for the story that is (and can/not be) told and raises the question of how, and by whom, that story is being narrated. In the study of literature, Genette (1983) offers a theory of narratology which can be used to examine

the relationship between the narrator and the plot. Genette (1983) theorises that each narrative position is underpinned by a different combination of two fundamental elements of the text: perspective and voice.

Narrative perspective mediates the relationship between the narrator and the story they tell. In other words, it tells us what the narrator can see and, thus, in what relation they stand to the story. Some narrators will be able to offer their audience an internal analysis of the events in the story as they unfold, whilst others, having a different narrative perspective, will present an external analysis of events. *Narrative voice* on the other hand is concerned not with ‘who sees’ but rather with ‘who says’ (Genette, 1983). Voice is about the relationship between the narrator and the narrative act itself. It is concerned with whether or not the narrator is a character in the story that they are telling (see Table 13.1).

In her work on the role of the researcher, Hatch (1996) uses this notion to examine the researcher’s position in relation to his or her research work. In this way, she frames ‘research as narrative performance’ (Hatch, 1996, p. 361) and identifies four different possible relationships between the researcher and what they are studying. Shifting these insights to the domain of methodology, it is possible to see that different qualitative data collection techniques offer researchers different combinations of ‘who sees’ (perspective) and ‘who says’ (voice).

When the results of an interview study are reported, the reader is often (implicitly) offered to share the assumption that the researcher has ‘seen’ the organisational

stories that are presented unfold. In fact, the researcher is reporting to the reader what has been reported to them by the organisational actor (McDonald & Simpson, 2014; Potter & Hepburn, 2005) and there is no direct relationship between the researcher and the organisational action. In narrative perspective terms, it is the interviewee, and not the interviewer who ‘sees’ the organisation. By the same token, although the researcher reports, edits and organises the data for the reader, the decision about which data are relevant to the study and how they are reported in the first place also belongs to the interviewee. Ultimately then it is the interviewee’s ‘voice’ that is represented in the final account. Although the researcher is an instigator and recorder of these organisational narratives, they are held at one remove from the organisation itself. At the other end of the spectrum, within an observation study, the researcher ‘sees’ the organisation first hand for themselves and exercises a lot more control over the data, owning both perspective and voice, albeit a voice based only on an external view of the organisational action without access to organisational narratives. Within a participant observation study there are two forms of both perspective and voice present: *researcher as organisational actor* has access to both organisational action and organisational narrative from an internal stance; and *researcher as researcher* has access to both from an external position relative to the organisation. Both voices and perspectives, however, belong to the researcher. Shadowing brings a fourth combination to these three traditional positions that researchers can take in

Table 13.1 Genette’s (1983) theory of narratology applied to data collection methods

Data collection method	Narrative elements	
	Perspective: <i>Who sees</i>	Voice: <i>Who says</i>
Interviews	Organisational actor	Organisational actor
Shadowing	Both	Both
Participant observation	Organisational actor as researcher	Organisational actor as researcher
Observation	Researcher	Researcher

relation to the organisation they study. Here the researcher ‘sees’ the organisational action from an external perspective at the same time as the organisational actor ‘sees’ it from an internal one. Done well, there are also two separate voices recorded in the data and subsequent reports of the study: the voice of the researcher and the voice of the organisational actor offering concurrent but distinct narratives of the organisational action they are part of. This description of narrative perspective and narrative voice is of course exaggerated here in order to draw these distinctions. All research accounts are to some extent co-constructed and don’t exist independently of the researcher-organisational actor relationship (Gill, 2011). The point here is that shadowing techniques allow the researcher to have a different relationship with both the organisational narratives and the organisational action, leading to different data and different insights (Shotter, 2006). They are neither better nor worse; they are simply different.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE RESEARCH CONTEXT AND THE ORGANISATIONAL ACTOR

As shadowing within an organisation sets up a different relationship with that organisation than other research approaches, it is useful to work through some of the implications that this will have for the researcher and for their data. One important difference is that the shadower remains an outsider to the organisation as an interviewer would, and yet can see the organisational action directly, first hand. This

significantly reduces the distance between the researcher and the organisation and therefore increases the data about the physical and social contexts that the researcher is able to record about any given action. This would also be the case for an observer, of course, but they do not have the benefit of access to organisational narratives, as the interviewer does. Neither do they have the chance to both access respondents’ organisational narratives and develop one of their own, as the shadower does, reducing distance between organisation and researcher in another way whilst retaining ‘outsider status’. See Table 13.2 for a summary of relationships a researcher may have with organisational actions and narratives.

Goffman’s (1967) discussion of social performance and his distinction between front stage and back stage is useful here. An interview is very much conducted within the ‘front stage’ of an organisation where the interviewee performs the organisational narratives for the benefit of the researcher, who forms the audience for the performance. The shadower is of course also the audience of a performance, but here they are allowed access to a wider range of organisational spaces, some of which may include the ‘back stage’ areas, allowing glimpses behind the scenes (Monahan & Fisher, 2010). The performance is also materially different because it is (or certainly becomes) less rehearsed and instead it is improvised in the moment. Another performance is happening in shadowing of course: the researcher’s performance. As the shadowing goes on, the researcher’s performance also becomes less practised and formal and the person being shadowed finds themselves seeing elements

Table 13.2 Relationships between researcher and organisation

<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Organisational action</i>	<i>Organisational narrative</i>
Insider role	Participant observation	Participant observation
Outsider role	Observation, shadowing	Interview, shadowing
No direct relationship	Interview	Observation

of the researcher's back stage too: the motivation and mechanics of the research act are partially revealed and discussed, each actor becoming part of the other's performance.

In the previous section it was demonstrated that shadowing sets up a different relationship between the researcher and the organisational narrative. This will also have implications for the data collected through shadowing. To use a lens from organisational theory, the interviewer and shadower both have access to what Argyris and Schon (1996) call 'espoused theory' or what people say does (or should) happen in their organisation, but shadowing also has access to 'theory in practice' or what actually happens. In this way, shadowing research can move research participants beyond discussions of the general or ideal ways of doing things, to sensemaking around the specific and concrete episodes they witness and or take part in together.

Taken together, these relationships between the shadower and the organisation and the shadower and the organisational actor underline the extent to which researcher and researched are engaged in the co-production of knowledge about the organisation. This is true in every research study (even in post-positivistic studies where it can be read as problematic), but the balance between the researcher and the researched in both the production and sensemaking of the data is perhaps unique in a shadowing study. This allows for a different view of an organisation which is well placed to inform questions about organisational practices (e.g. Gehman et al., 2013), processes (e.g. Blake & Stalberg, 2009), roles (e.g. Gilliat-Ray, 2011) and interactions (e.g. Fenton et al., 1997) in a detailed and specific way.

These different relationships between researcher, context and organisational actor also permit the articulation of the mundane, every day, unsaid, unsayable and taken for granted which can be accessed through the combination of trust and insight built up in both directions between the researcher and the researched. This gives organisational research

access to new possibilities for research questions that would be harder to answer through other research relationships as a number of researchers have demonstrated.

In their introduction to their special issue on invisible work, Nardi and Engeström (1999) describe different kinds of work in contemporary organisations that have become invisible. These include work that is done behind the scenes which is un(der)valued because it is done out of sight, leading to assumptions that it is very straightforward, unimportant or not done at all. The special issue also discusses work that is informal in nature, defying quantification. This kind of work, such as snatched conversations in corridors, jokes told between team members, regular lunch meetings without specific agendas and organisational stories recounted to new recruits have a real and profound effect on organising processes, but they do not appear on any job descriptions or strategic plans. This makes them both hard to manage and vulnerable to being weakened or lost when visible tasks are reallocated, personnel change or restructuring takes place. In her piece from this special issue, Westerberg (1999) elects to shadow organisational actors in order to understand some of the invisible nature of their work because 'From different meetings, interviews and written comments in the questionnaire we had a description of what the managers *thought* and how they *felt* about their work but we didn't know what they actually were *doing*' (p. 99). By taking this approach, Westerberg is able to demonstrate that although some kinds of managerial decision rely on the formal hierarchy of the organisation, others are made through information gathering and opinion seeking through an informal, experience (rather than position) based social network approach that enhances, and enables the official decision-making process.

In another study, also set in a healthcare context, Quinlan (2008) uses shadowing as a data collection technique to operationalise her institutional ethnography approach.

She uses shadowing to ‘step into’ the world of the Nurse Practitioner and allow her as a researcher to see the organisation through the standpoint of that specific role. Through this work, Quinlan (2008) was able to take what the Nurse Practitioner actually did as a starting point for their exchanges, building up her sensemaking of that role from the actions she observed, rather than from any preconceived idea of what the Nurse Practitioner should do, or from an official job description. They were able to set up a relationship that was ‘not encumbered by the established protocols governing the relationships between researcher and researched used in traditional sociological research methods ... [and that they] ... were relatively free to craft ... [their] own terms of interaction’ (p. 1489). By developing a purposeful combination of closeness and distance with the organisational actors she followed, Quinlan found examples of how actors can significantly facilitate important organisational processes that on paper have nothing to do with their job titles or responsibilities (Quinlan, 2008). Seeing the organisation in this way can lead to powerful and meaningful suggestions for change or improvement because they are informed by an understanding of what people actually do and what it is like to do that. This aspect of the shadowing process makes it particularly helpful for institutional ethnographers and action researchers (see e.g. Sclavi, 2014) who want to see the organisation from the inside out and seek improvements that serve the people directly involved in the ‘doing’ of that organisation.

Shadowing can also provide evidence of political work done within or between departments, or work that is undertaken in order to make a badly designed organisational process work despite the official procedures. Van Hulst and his team (van Hulst et al., 2012) were interested in producing research which focused on individuals operating in extremely complex environments where ‘what seems to be needed are creative ways to mediate and at times redesign the multidimensional

interface between (groups of) people, (formal and informal) policies and (sub)-systems’ (p. 436). They were looking at policy from the perspective, not of what had been decided by important stakeholders, but rather in terms of how these decisions could (or could not be) and were (and were not) implemented through the practices of key individuals. Their shadowing approach helped them to draw detailed accounts of the ways in which people making a difference to disadvantaged neighbourhoods went about solving real problems. These practices involved rule breaking, trust building, improvisation and boundary spanning practices that would have been difficult to ‘witness’ using other techniques.

Shadowing can also show how individuals in an organisation, whilst appearing to work within the rules, block the work or progression of others or how organisational resistance being employed can lead to innovative, negotiated ways of organising (Waddell & Sohal, 1998). Work of this kind is not so much invisible as deliberately hidden. Without knowledge of the hidden organisation, scholars cannot see the full picture of organisational practices and potentially produce less robust and authentic accounts of organising to underpin their theorising of, and interventions in, organising. The kinds of relationships that shadowing brings to the nexus of context, actors and practices are particularly well placed to articulate the invisible in an organisation, whether the invisibility is due to the fact that the work is mundane, informal, undervalued, rule breaking or hidden.

MOVEMENT AND REAL TIME

One of the distinguishing factors of shadowing techniques is that it is infused with movement. The movement is not controlled by the researcher, but by the person, or in some cases the policy (Gehman, et al., 2013) or object (Bruni, 2005) that they are shadowing. This raises a number of practical issues for the pair.

The question of access of the researcher to the organisational actor and to the organisation becomes something that cannot be negotiated in a one-off way at the outset of the research. This is partly because it cannot be entirely predicted in advance. Instead it must be continually negotiated between researcher and organisational actor. If a customer turns up unexpectedly to discuss the pricing of a prototype, it might raise questions of commercial confidentiality that had not been anticipated and must be resolved in the moment. There is a range of situations which a shadower might come across where her presence might feel uncomfortable for the shadower and/or the organisational actor and/or their organisational colleagues. These situations often have an informal or personal element and are usually not foreseen when the initial access negotiation takes place between shadower and organisation and/or organisational actor. To illustrate this point using situations from my own shadowing work, consider what the shadower should do and how she might feel whilst the director of production: calls her husband; arranges a meeting to discipline an underperforming colleague; comforts a distressed friend from another department who has been wrongly blamed for missing a deadline; uses the shadower's presence to ensure that a colleague doesn't bring up an issue in a performance meeting as part of a long-held rivalry; stays late into the night to buy her team beer and take away pizza, and work with them to meet an important deadline; pretends to meet a client and instead goes to the dentist in the middle of the day. All of these things are part of her day and help the researcher understand her role within the organisational space, but none of them are things to which most of us wish to bear witness. The level of relevance the researcher will see in shadowing a specific event may well be influenced by their own academic discipline. An ethnographer, for example, might view all of these episodes (and her own feelings about them) as legitimate data, whilst an occupational psychologist might see some of them as less pertinent

to their study. Sometimes the organisational actor will wish to rescind access to a specific event or episode and sometimes the shadower will wish to withdraw. When they are in agreement about this it is straightforward, but where there are differing opinions about what it is appropriate to shadow then this can become socially difficult.

Although a researcher may theoretically distinguish between shadowing an individual and shadowing an individual as a single locus within a network, in practice the difference is artificial. Shadowing work will inevitably extend its gaze far beyond the opinions and actions of a single person, taking in a wide range of organisational actors with which the individual being shadowed has interactions, no matter how trivial. In effect, the shadower captures the practices of the organisational actor, their team, their boss, their friendship groups, the people who make the rules about where they can park and the people who serve their lunch. The organisational actor is the lens through which the organisational context and practices are viewed by the researcher, rather than the locus or even focus of the research.

The lack of control the researcher has over where, and with whom, the research will be conducted and the fact that access is continuously negotiated and renegotiated, also has important ethical implications. Most qualitative researchers have approaches which include repertoires of informed consent. Like organisational access, informed consent is something that is established at the outset of the project for a whole department or organisation, for an observation study for example, and/or at the beginning of the relationship with individual organisational actors, in the case of an interview study. In a shadowing study, consent can be granted on behalf of the organisation as a whole by senior management and informed consent can be deliberated by the person(s) being shadowed in a thorough and appropriate manner. However, the range of people that are met momentarily through the shadowing process, included in the research

account and gone again before they have the chance to wonder who that person following their colleague was, reaches throughout the organisation as well as across its boundaries. Some participants, such as a client at the other end of a telephone call, might be wholly unaware that they are being included in research at all. This presents a series of ethical dilemmas for shadowers who have promised their university Ethics Committees something that they are unlikely to be able to deliver in practice: informed consent from all research participants. See Johnson (2014) for an excellent discussion of this issue.

Shadowing techniques focus on lived experience, like many other qualitative approaches, but they are interested in understanding them in the now. Unlike interviewing approaches which focus on actors' narratives about what has happened, these accounts focus on what is happening. Although shadowing techniques record much data (what is being said, where the organisational actor goes, who they speak with, how they approach issues, which issues consume their day) as it unfolds, not all shadowing data are situated in the present. The shadowing techniques that include eliciting a running commentary from organisational actors (see, for example, Bartkowiak-Theron & Sappey, 2012) or one to one interview debriefs at the end of each day (see, for example, Bruni et al., 2005), will often find that explanations for some observed actions, opinions or reactions will include data set in the recent or even remote past as well as hopes, fears and plans for the future. As well as current actions being set within the immediate, physical organisational context, then, they are often framed in the context of past and future organisational narratives (Schultz & Hernes, 2013).

This movement through the organisation and the fact that a significant proportion of the data are situated in the unfolding present is what makes shadowing techniques so physically and mentally demanding. The researcher is not only creating a contemporaneous record of speech and actions, and doing this whilst they are moving through organisational spaces

at the speed of a sophisticated organisational actor, but they are simultaneously engaged in the preliminary data analysis required to construct a series of questions for the person with whom they are running to catch up.

Although both the movement through the organisation and the contemporaneous nature of the data collection present practical, methodological and ethical challenges to the researcher, they do allow for the generation of data which can answer a useful set of research questions related to organisational time and space. Researchers have used shadowing approaches to examine how organisational actors apportion their time to different kinds of tasks. Earley and Bubb (2013) were able to develop a detailed understanding of how and why new headteachers divided their time between competing managerial, administrative and leadership tasks. In a similar vein, Vie (2010) was able to answer questions about how the work of middle managers is changing. Czarniawska (2004) advocates shadowing techniques as necessary to take the examination of organisational time further (Evans et al., 2004). Her shadowing data raise questions about how time is experienced and recounted within organisation narratives (Hernes et al., 2013). Equally, work which regards organisational spaces as active in framing organisational processes (Yanow, 1998) will benefit from shadowing techniques that can critically examine the relationships between organisational actors and the spaces they inhabit (Evans & Jones, 2011; Taylor & Spicer, 2007).

INTERRUPTION OF ORGANISATION

One of the most powerful features of shadowing is that it captures actions and perceptions of these actions not just in context, but in the moment that they take place. In other words, this is researching at the pace of organising (Czarniawska, 2007) and in the moment of organising. As well as providing access to a

less rehearsed performance from organisational actors, this has the added benefit of not interrupting the organising it is seeking to research to the same extent. Having argued that both the organising and, to an extent, the researching become co-produced in a shadowing study, it would be disingenuous to suggest that shadowing does not influence the organising practices it studies. Shadowing would interrupt the organisational action to a greater extent than an observation study would, for example. However, it creates much less interruption to organising than any of the interviewing techniques used in organisational research. Most interviewing techniques take place outside of organising, in prearranged meetings which are scheduled in such a way as to invite the interruption and/or suspension of organising for the duration of the interview. This is a useful approach in that it helps separate the narrative being offered to the researcher from the organising itself, making it much easier for the interviewee to package and the interviewer to manage. However, the very characteristics that make it more straightforward make it less immediate and potentially, because the researcher has access to a performed rather than lived experience, less (or perhaps just differently) authentic (Peterson, 2005). Shadowing then has the ability to research organising without asking actors to stop organising. As such, it has much to offer scholars engaged in researching organisational presence (Cooren et al., 2008).

As shadowing is less apt to interrupt organising, and perhaps in part also because of the sheer volume of the data flow(s), the data themselves tend to be less directed by the interests and intellectual agenda of the researcher than data in an observation study would be and, at the same time, less packaged by the organisational actor than the data from an interview study might be. This can give the impression that shadowing data are more 'grounded' than those gathered by other qualitative approaches. However, paradoxically, whilst the data themselves may

flow relatively freely from actual organisational practices, only a fraction of what is experienced can ever be recorded and even then the huge quantities of data that are captured by the researcher must be drastically reduced in size through analytic and interpretative processes in order for them to be presented through academic vehicles such as books and journal articles. It may be that this heavy editorial, analytical, sensemaking hand in fact adds more rather than less researcher interpretation to the shadowing accounts than would be necessary for other studies. In other words, the shadower should not be regarded as a neutral vehicle through which organisational data are collected, neither should the influence of the researcher be regarded as stopping when she leaves the field. It is important to consider within such discussions of researcher influence that our discomfort with researcher influence stems from a positivistic ideal that the observed and the observer should or could be separate. Instead, researcher influence should be both illuminated and celebrated (Monahan & Fisher, 2010) within qualitative research traditions.

CONCLUSION

In summary, researchers have been shadowing practitioners in organisations since organisational research began (Walker et al., 1956). Since the mid-2000s, more scholars have been writing about shadowing approaches, and crucially, discussing and comparing them critically. This work has enriched and expanded our repertoires as qualitative researchers. Shadowing organisational actors gathers data in the tradition of (and in turn is part of) the enacted organisation and, as such, it can inform a wide range of organisational research approaches which regard both knowing and doing as mediated, situated, provisional, pragmatic and contested (Blackler, 1995). It has an important

Table 13.3 Shadowing compared to other qualitative research methods

<i>Research method</i>	<i>Voice</i>	<i>Movement captured</i>	<i>Distance from organizing</i>	<i>Research relationship</i>	<i>Production of knowledge</i>	<i>Time perspective</i>	<i>Control over data collected</i>	<i>Setting</i>
Interviews	Actor	Time	Medium	Actor	Facilitated by researcher	Retrospective (possibility of prospective)	Shared	Outside normal work context
Shadowing	Actor and researcher	Continuous across time & space	Low	Actor in context	Co-production (actor and researcher)	Now (possibility of retrospective and prospective)	Actor	Within natural flow of organising
Participant observation	Researcher (actors reported)	Time & space	Low	Researcher in context	Researcher (active)	Now (possibility of retrospective and prospective)	Researcher	Within natural flow of organising
Observation	Researcher	Time & space	High	Context	Researcher (passive)	Now	Researcher	Outside natural flow of organising
Focus groups	Multiple actors	Time	Medium	Actors with each other	Co-production by actors	Retrospective (possibility of prospective)	Multiple actors	Outside normal work context

role to play in the development of the many strands of organisational research which pursue these views of organising. It also has much to add to the accumulating interests in how actors move through organisational space over time that Costas (2013) characterises as the gathering momentum of a 'mobilities turn' in organisational research. More application of shadowing approaches and more critical debate will be needed for their full potential as research instruments to be realised in organisational research.

Shadowing is essentially interviewing and observing at the same time, but it is much more than the sum of its parts. In this chapter I have argued that shadowing fosters a dual narrative of the organisation borne of two perspectives and two voices; it offers the researcher different relationships to the research context and to the organisational actor than other qualitative approaches; it takes account of movement through the organisation and allows the researcher to operate in real time; and it takes place within the flow of organising. Perhaps most important of all, it raises the possibility of two-way reflexivity for both the researcher and the organisational actor, adding a naturally hermeneutic layer to qualitative inquiry (Bartkowiak-Theron & Sappey, 2012).

In Table 13.3 I offer a visual summary of the arguments presented within this chapter, which serves a dual purpose. First, it sets out a simplified version of the arguments that have been made about the similarities and differences to other research methods throughout this chapter. However, it also provides a visual reminder that although shadowing may not be completely unique in terms of any single aspect of research design, it represents a different combination of research strengths and weaknesses to other qualitative research methods. It is this unique *combination* of methodological characteristics that makes shadowing such a distinct and powerful tool for unlocking a particular set of research questions. By side stepping the methodological, and to some extent

epistemological, sleight of hand of reporting 'what people do' on the basis of asking them what they do and conflating reported actions for actual practices, shadowing offers something quite simple. It supplies different (not better, just different) answers to the question: what do people do all day? These answers are co-produced, changing and novel forms of knowledge of organising borne of a different kind of relationship between researched and researcher that moves through organisational time and space. Moreover, the answers to this question turn out to be powerful in finding new ways to understand.

REFERENCES

- Argyris, C. and Schon, D.A. (1996) *Organizational Learning II*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Bartkowiak-Theron, I., & Robyn Sappey, J. (2012). The methodological identity of shadowing in social science research. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 12(1), 7–16.
- Blackler, F. (1995). Knowledge, knowledge work and organizations: An overview and interpretation. *Organization Studies*, 16(6), 1021–46.
- Blake, K., & Stalberg, E. (2009). Me and my shadow: Observation, documentation, and analysis of serials and electronic resources workflow. *Serials Review*, 35(4), 242–52.
- Bruni, A. (2005). Shadowing software and clinical records: On the ethnography of non-humans and heterogeneous contexts. *Organization*, 12(3), 357–78.
- Bruni, A., Gherardi, S., & Poggio, B. (2005). *Gender and Entrepreneurship: An Ethnographic Approach* (1st ed., Vol. 1). London, New York: Routledge.
- Cooren, F., Brummans, B.H., & Charrieras, D. (2008). The coproduction of organizational presence: A study of Médecins Sans Frontières in action. *Human Relations*, 61(10), 1339–70.
- Costas, J. (2013). Problematizing mobility: A metaphor of stickiness, non-places and the kinetic elite. *Organization Studies*, 34(10), 1467–85.

- Couldry, N. (2003). Passing ethnographies: Rethinking the sites of agency and reflexivity in a mediated world. In P.D. Murphy & M.M. Kraidy (Eds), *Global Media Studies: Ethnographic Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, pp. 40–56.
- Czarniawska, B. (2004). On time, space, and action nets. *Organization*, 11(6), 773–91.
- Czarniawska, B. (2007), *Shadowing and Other Techniques for Doing Fieldwork in Modern Societies*. Malmö, Sweden: Liber AB.
- Dewilde, J., & Creese, A. (2016). Discursive shadowing in linguistic ethnography: Situated practices and circulating discourses in multilingual schools. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 47(3), 329–39.
- Earley, P. and Bubb, S. (2013). A day in the life of new headteachers: Learning from observation. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 41(6), 782–99.
- Evans, J., & Jones, P. (2011). The walking interview: Methodology, mobility and place. *Applied Geography*, 31(2), 849–58.
- Evans, J.A., Kunda, G., & Barley, S.R. (2004). Beach time, bridge time, and billable hours: The temporal structure of technical contracting. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 49(1), 1–38.
- Fenton, N., Bryman, A., Deacon, D., & Birmingham, P. (1997). ‘Sod off and find us a boffin’: Journalists and the social science conference. *The Sociological Review*, 45(1), 1–23.
- Frandsen, A.-C. (2010). The role of disciplining/ translating accounting practices in patient-centred care. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 23(4), 381–91.
- Gehman, J., Trevino, L.K., & Garud, R. (2013). Values work: A process study of the emergence and performance of organizational values practices. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(1), 84–112.
- Genette, G. (1983). *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Gill, R. (2011). The shadow in organizational ethnography: Moving beyond shadowing to spect-acting. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 6(2), 115–33.
- Gill, R., Barbour, J., & Dean, M. (2014). Shadowing in/as work: Ten recommendations for shadowing fieldwork practice. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 9(1), 69–89.
- Gilliat-Ray, S. (2011). ‘Being there’: The experience of shadowing a British Muslim Hospital chaplain. *Qualitative Research*, 11(5), 469–86.
- Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction Ritual*. Rutgers, NJ: Aldine Transaction, pp. 5–45.
- Hatch, M.J. (1996). The role of the researcher: An analysis of narrative position in organization theory. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 5(4), 359–74.
- Hernes, T., Simpson, B., & Söderlund, J. (2013). Managing and temporality. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 29(1), 1–6.
- Johansen, M.B., & Forberg, J.L. (2011). Nurses’ evaluation of a new formalised triage system in the emergency department: A qualitative study. *Danish Medical Bulletin*, 58(10), 1–5.
- Johnson, B. (2014). Ethical issues in shadowing research. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 9(1), 21–40.
- Kostera, M. (2007) *Organisational Ethnography: Methods and Inspirations*. Lund, Sweden: Studentlitteratur.
- McDonald, S. (2005). Studying actions in context: A qualitative shadowing method for organizational research. *Qualitative Research*, 5(4), 455–73.
- McDonald, S., & Simpson, B. (2014). Shadowing research in organizations: The methodological debates. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 9(1), 3–20.
- Meunier, D., & Vásquez, C. (2008). On shadowing the hybrid character of actions: A communicational approach. *Communication Methods and Measures*, 2(3), 167–92.
- Mintzberg, H. (1970). Structured observation as a method to study managerial work. *Journal of Management Studies*, 7(1), 87–104.
- Mintzberg, H. (1973). *The Nature of Managerial Work*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Monahan, T., & Fisher, J.A. (2010). Benefits of ‘observer effects’: Lessons from the field. *Qualitative Research*, 10(3), 357–76.
- Nardi, B.A., & Engeström, Y. (1999). A web on the wind: The structure of invisible work. *Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW)*, 8(1), 1–8.

- Peterson, R.A. (2005). In search of authenticity. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(5), 1083–98.
- Polite, V.C., McClure, R. and Rollie, D.L. (1997) The emerging reflective urban principal: The role of shadowing encounters. *Urban Education*, 31(5), 466–89.
- Potter, J. and Hepburn, A. (2005). 'Qualitative interviews in psychology: problems and possibilities. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2(4), 281–307.
- Quinlan, E. (2008). Conspicuous invisibility Shadowing as a data collection strategy. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14(8), 1480–99.
- Roan, A., & Rooney, D. (2006). Shadowing experiences and the extension of communities of practice: A case study of women education managers. *Management Learning*, 37(4), 433–54.
- Schultz, M., & Hernes, T. (2013). A temporal perspective on organizational identity. *Organization Science*, 24(1), 1–21.
- Sclavi, M. (2007). *An Italian Lady Goes to the Bronx*. Milan, Italy: IPOC.
- Sclavi, M. (2014). Shadowing and Consensus building: A golden bridge. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 9(1), 66–8.
- Shotter, J. (2006) Understanding process from within: An argument for 'witness'-thinking. *Organization Studies*, 27(4), 585–604.
- Taylor, S., & Spicer, A. (2007). Time for space: A narrative review of research on organizational spaces. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 9(4), 325–46.
- Urban, A.-M., & Quinlan, E. (2014). Not for the faint of heart: Insider and outsider shadowing experiences within Canadian health care organizations. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 9(1), 47–65.
- van Hulst, M., de Graaf, L., & van den Brink, G. (2012). The work of exemplary practitioners in neighborhood governance. *Critical Policy Studies*, 6(4), 434–51.
- Vie, O. E. (2010). Have post-bureaucratic changes occurred in managerial work? *European Management Journal*, 28(3), 182–94.
- Vukic, A., & Keddy, B. (2002), Northern nursing practice in a primary health care setting. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 40(5), 542–8.
- Waddell, D., & Sohal, A. S. (1998). Resistance: A constructive tool for change management. *Management Decision*, 36(8), 543–8.
- Walker, C.R., Guest, R.H., & Turner, A.N. (1956) *The Foreman on the Assembly Line*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Westerberg, K. (1999). Collaborative networks among female middle managers in a hierarchical organization. *Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW)*, 8(1–2), 95–114.
- Wolcott, H.F. (1973). *The Man in the Principal's Office: An Ethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Yanow, D. (1998). Space stories: Studying museum buildings as organizational spaces while reflecting on interpretive methods and their narration. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 7(3), 215–39.

Thematic Analysis in Organisational Research

Nigel King and Joanna Brooks

INTRODUCTION

Thematic analysis is ever-present in qualitative organisational research – it appears in methods textbooks, in empirical articles across the breadth of the discipline, and is taught to business, management and organisational studies students at all levels. Despite this, there remains a good deal of inconsistency and confusion around the topic. As experienced qualitative researchers, we are frequently asked questions such as:

Is it a methodology or a method?
How can we make sense of the differences between various approaches to thematic analysis?
Is there a particular philosophical position that underpins thematic analysis?
How do we know – and demonstrate – that we've done it well?

We are not so naïve as to believe that in this chapter we can come up with definitive answers to these and other questions that will be acceptable to all. We will, though, present

our view of how the nature of thematic analysis in qualitative organisational research is best understood, arguing for the distinction between methodology-specific and generic approaches, with the latter being our principal focus. We will emphasise the importance of considering one's particular philosophical position when using thematic analysis and critically compare a number of commonly used approaches. In our conclusion, we will examine some of the main critical arguments raised in relation to thematic analysis, and consider the overall strengths and weaknesses of the method.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS: DEFINITIONS, DISTINCTIONS AND KEY ISSUES

What is Thematic Analysis?

For us, the term 'thematic analysis' refers to forms of qualitative data analysis that principally focus on identifying, organising and

interpreting themes in textual data. We refer to ‘forms’ in the plural because we argue that it is not a single method but a broad approach which encompasses many different styles. This of course begs the question as to what is meant by ‘themes’. Following King and Horrocks (2010), we define themes as ‘recurrent and distinctive features of participants’ accounts, characterising particular perceptions and/or experiences, which the researcher sees as relevant to the research question’ (p. 150). To unpack this definition further, the first element is that a theme is intrinsically recurrent – something distinctive and characteristic in a particular research text (such as an interview transcript). A one-off comment could not constitute a theme, but we have no problem in principle in identifying a theme that is unique to a single case – in other words, themes do not necessarily have to be identified across cases. The final part of the definition emphasises that themes do not exist independently from the researcher carrying out the analysis. They are not like a fossil hidden in a rock, waiting for someone to come along and break it open to discover them. While there are different philosophical positions on how themes relate to the actual experiences of research participants (which we discuss further shortly), we maintain that even in the mostly strongly realist approaches they cannot be considered as objective entities.

Literature on thematic analysis commonly refers to ‘codes’ and ‘coding’ as well as themes. We take ‘code’ to refer to short comments or abbreviations linked to passages of text to indicate material of relevance to the research aims. Such codes may be developed as analysis proceeds into themes. Coding is therefore the process of indexing text with codes and in due course themes. There is some variation between approaches and disciplines in exactly how these terms are used, so it is important to consider how a particular writer is employing them.

Why Choose Thematic Analysis?

Thematic analysis is often considered the ‘basic’ method for identifying and analysing patterns in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2013), and as we have noted, is very widely used in qualitative data analysis. Qualitative research often produces large amounts of detailed data: all approaches to thematic analysis seek to identify, make sense of and highlight the key themes in a rich qualitative data set so that important features of the research phenomena can be communicated to and understood by a wider audience. Part of the appeal of thematic approaches to qualitative data analysis lies in their potentially broad application. Thematic analysis methods can be applied to very different qualitative data sets: from first person accounts such as in traditional research interviews, through larger group interviews perhaps obtained in a focus group settings, through to secondary data sources such as media resources. Thematic analysis approaches can be used with data sets of varying sizes, and can be applied to a wide range of research interests and topics. Depending on the particular form of thematic analysis chosen, it can be used from a number of theoretical perspectives, and so applied to usefully answer a wide range of research questions. We will turn now to consider the different approaches within the thematic analysis tradition, and to highlight key considerations that should be taken into account when choosing a particular thematic analysis approach.

Styles of Thematic Analysis

There are many different ways in which thematic analysis can and has been carried out, which makes it difficult for an inexperienced qualitative organisational researcher to choose which to adopt. The tendency we suspect is for researchers to opt for the

version that is most familiar to them, and/or most commonly used in their own area of activity, which may not always be the one that is best suited to the needs of a particular study. While we are not going to propose a full typology here, we will highlight key features that researchers should consider when making a choice of thematic analysis method.

A key distinction is between *methodology-specific* and *generic* forms of thematic analysis. In the former case, one or more types of thematic analysis are used as an integral part of a wider methodology. For instance, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) uses a type that moves from a detailed within-case to a cross-case thematic analysis (Smith et al., 2009). Grounded Theory incorporates several forms of thematic analysis, including open coding and axial coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The crucial point about these is that the researcher cannot simply use the mechanics of the thematic analysis method without adhering to the wider requirements – both philosophical and methodological – of the methodology. One cannot with any credibility decide, after a study has been designed and data collected, to analyse the data using IPA or Grounded Theory.

Generic forms of thematic analysis are, as the name suggests, not tied to any one philosophical, theoretical and/or methodological position. We tend to refer to the various versions of generic thematic analysis as ‘styles’, rather than treating them as distinct types. This is because there are significant overlaps between them and we would expect researchers to adapt and sometimes blend them to meet the requirements of their study. For the rest of this chapter our main focus will be on generic forms. We will focus on some of the more widely used styles in organisational research – Template Analysis (King & Brooks, 2016); Braun and Clarke’s (2006) version of thematic analysis; Matrix Analysis (Nadin & Cassell, 2004) and Framework Analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). But before turning to particular styles, we should first highlight an issue of particular relevance

to those using a generic style of thematic analysis. Such approaches are often more flexible and adaptable than methodology-specific forms because they are not bound by particular theoretical or philosophical commitments. However, this does not render such commitments irrelevant or inconsequential. As such approaches are not tied to a particular philosophical or theoretical position, this creates the necessity for the researcher to work out their own position and ensure that analysis is carried out in a manner that is coherent with it. The risk is that researchers may fail to do this and go through the mechanics of the method without any consideration of the position that underpins it. In the following section, we will highlight some useful ways that researchers using generic forms of thematic analysis can think about and describe the position of their work.

Philosophical Underpinnings of Generic Thematic Analysis

Since generic styles of thematic analysis do not come with an inherent philosophical foundation, it is essential for any researcher to consider the philosophical assumptions that underpin their work. In particular, they need to consider their assumptions about *ontology* – the nature of the reality they are investigating – and *epistemology* – what it is possible to know about that reality. With reference to the Template Analysis style of thematic analysis, we have found it useful to classify positions according to whether they adopt a realist or relativist ontology, and a realist or constructivist epistemology (King & Brooks, 2017). We feel this can helpfully apply to generic thematic analysis more widely. Any typology of positions inevitably presents clear boundaries where in fact there is blurring and overlap; with that warning in mind, we suggest four broad categories of philosophical position: qualitative neo-positivist, limited realist, contextualist and radical constructionist. In Table 14.1 we summarise the ontological and

Table 14.1 Different philosophical positions for research and their implications for the use of generic styles of thematic analysis

<i>Philosophical position</i>	<i>Ontology</i>	<i>Epistemology</i>	<i>Implications for use of generic thematic analysis</i>
Neo-positivism	Realist	Realist	Seeks to build or test theory, minimising impact of researcher subjectivity Use of independent coders to verify accuracy of themes May use strong, theory-linked a priori themes
Limited realism	Realist	Constructivist/relativist	Seeks to develop an account that is credible and potentially transferable, while recognising conclusions will always be tentative Often uses a priori themes informed by theory or evaluation criteria Quality checks to stimulate critical thinking, specific to needs of particular study Reflexivity in analysis important, to go beyond researcher subjectivity
Contextualism	Relativist (or indeterminate)	Constructivist/relativist	Seeks to understand participants' meaning-making within the specific research context Focus on induction and emergent themes; highly tentative use of a priori themes (if at all) Reflexivity: researcher subjectivity integral to whole process
Radical constructionism	Relativist	Strongly relativist	Seeks to critically examine how the phenomena of organisational life are constructed, including how organisational research itself constructs knowledge Scepticism about any quality criteria in analysis Focus on themes as aspects of discursive construction rather than of direct experience

Source: adapted from King & Brooks, 2017

epistemological stance of each of these and highlight key issues which need to be considered in utilising a generic form of thematic analysis from each position.

Assuring Quality in Thematic Analysis

There is an extensive literature on quality in qualitative research, much of it focusing strongly on analysis (e.g. Symon & Cassell, 2012; Tracy, 2010; Yardley, 2008). It is beyond the scope of the present chapter to review this literature in detail. However, we will provide some brief thoughts on the relationship between quality assurance and philosophical position, before moving on to highlight some of the main quality procedures used in various forms of thematic analysis.

The diversity of philosophical positions underpinning qualitative organisational research inevitably means there can be no universal prescriptions for quality assurance. We agree with previous authors such as Johnson, Buehring, Cassell and Symon (2006) that the approach to quality needs to be contingent upon the philosophical roots of a study. For example, with reference to Table 14.1, while a case can be made for calculating statistical inter-coder agreement in a neo-positivist study, with a strong realist ontology *and* epistemology, it would make no sense at all in radical constructionist study. The starting point for any decisions about quality assurance in thematic analysis must therefore be a consideration of the implications of the study's ontological and epistemological stance.

There are numerous strategies used to ensure the quality of thematic analysis, most of which can be adapted for most philosophical positions. We will briefly discuss three of them here; *inter-coder comparison* (in various forms), *respondent feedback* and *audit trails*. Starting with the first of these, researchers who use inter-coder comparisons do so with the involvement of different types of coder and at different stages in the

analysis. Independent coding may be carried out between members of the research team, and/or with people outside the team who may be experts in the topic, the methodology, or both. It may take place at a very early stage to see what preliminary codes and potential themes both parties identify. Alternatively, it may be conducted once a first version of a coding framework has been developed, to test it out. In realist approaches, such comparisons will be seen as addressing the accuracy of coding to themes and/or clarity of their definitions. In contrast, relativist approaches will normally see inter-coder comparisons as a way to stimulate fresh perspectives on the data and to support the researcher(s)' reflexivity.

Participant feedback refers to any attempt to involve some or all of a study's participants in the analysis process. This can involve anything from 'blind' checking of a sample of coding up to highly participatory approaches where participants are truly co-researchers. We prefer this term to 'member checking' as that sounds too limited in scope or 'respondent validation' which implies that participants can objectively certify whether a researcher's interpretation is 'correct'. This latter kind of claim only makes sense from a qualitative neo-positivist position (see Table 14.1), and even here researchers need to be aware that the idea of validation is a complex one. The participant's view of their experience is of necessity not the same as the external gaze of the researcher, however empathetic. Also, participants may be influenced by the desire to please the researcher, or alternately be unwilling to 'admit' to the validity of interpretations that they find unflattering. In most qualitative analysis, therefore, respondent feedback is seen as an additional source of information which enriches the analysis but is itself subject to critical reflection as much as the original data.

As well as ensuring that participant feedback is used in a manner congruent with a study's overall assumptions, it is vital to consider the ethical implications of its use.

In some circumstances, it may be seen as ethically very positive, as a means of acknowledging participants as more than just a source of data. However, it may sometimes be ethically problematic – for instance, where it may require participants to re-visit difficult or painful experiences.

An audit trail is a record of how the analysis developed over the course of a study. It would normally include successive versions of the thematic framework developed in the study, noting changes to themes, their use and the way they are structured to relate to each other. Annotating such versions to capture the reasoning behind changes is advisable; such details are easily forgotten over the often extended time period needed to complete analysis. It can also be helpful to keep a research diary in which the researcher reflects on the ongoing research process and their place in it. Cross-referencing from this to the audit trail can help build a strongly reflexive understanding of the analysis. Because most forms of thematic analysis have a fair degree of structure to their procedures and practices, keeping an audit trail should be relatively straightforward. For instance, in our writing about Template Analysis we always encourage researchers to retain and keep notes on each iteration of their template (e.g. King & Brooks, 2017).

USING THEMATIC ANALYSIS IN QUALITATIVE ORGANISATIONAL RESEARCH

Now we have introduced the distinction between generic and specific forms of thematic analysis and established key principles to ascertain and assure quality across a range of thematic analysis approaches, we will move on to look at some of the various generic approaches to thematic analysis used in organisational research. There are, as we have noted, a number of different styles, and in this section, we will look at some of those

more commonly used in organisational research. We will describe how to undertake thematic analysis using the example of one particular approach, Template Analysis (King & Brooks, 2017). We will then consider some other alternative approaches commonly used in qualitative organisational research: Braun and Clark's style of thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006); Matrix Analysis (Nadin & Cassell, 2004); and Framework Analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). We will conclude with a critical comparison of these four styles of generic thematic analysis.

Template Analysis

Template Analysis is a generic style of thematic analysis which has been widely used in organisational and management research as well as in many other disciplines, and applied to a broad range of different research topics (King, 2012; King & Brooks, 2017). As a generic thematic analysis style, Template Analysis is not wedded to a particular philosophical position, and has arguably been used from a wider variety of epistemological positions than other styles of thematic analysis (see Brooks et al., 2015, for a description of its use in three studies with quite different approaches).

All styles of thematic analysis include two core processes: *defining themes* and *organising themes* into some kind of structure that represents conceptual relationships between them (King & Brooks, 2017). While particular styles of thematic analysis may define themes and arrange structures in different ways, there are some steps in the coding process that are very similar across pretty much all of them. We will use Template Analysis as an example to guide the reader through the main procedural steps of analysis. However, there are certain features of the method that diverge from approaches, and we will highlight these shortly. Additionally, it is important to note that descriptions of how to undertake analysis

should not be seen as prescriptive. The real strength of generic approaches to thematic analysis is that they provide structure to the task of undertaking analysis while allowing the analyst to adapt them to the needs of their particular study. This is certainly true of Template Analysis.

Let us identify first some of the features of Template Analysis which may not be common across all generic approaches to thematic analysis. Template Analysis involves the development of a *coding template*, often based on a subset of data, which is then applied to further data and revised and refined. Although there is an emphasis on hierarchical coding, Template Analysis does not (unlike some other approaches to thematic data analysis) suggest a particular set sequence of coding levels, and is flexible regarding the style and format of the coding template produced. This means that researchers using Template Analysis often develop particular themes more extensively, enabling them to capture the richest and most detailed aspects of their data. Some approaches to thematic analysis distinguish between descriptive and interpretive coding, whereas Template Analysis does not insist on such an explicit distinction: indeed King (2012) suggests that ‘it is debatable whether there is ever such a clear distinction between [the two]’ (p. 429). Template Analysis takes a similarly pragmatic approach to inductive versus deductive coding. Rather than insisting on coding using either a ‘bottom up’ approach (in which themes are derived inductively from the data) or a ‘top down’ approach (in which themes are informed by previously determined concerns – either theoretical or practical), Template Analysis allows the use of either or both. In Template Analysis, it is permissible (although not obligatory) to define some themes in advance of coding (known as *a priori themes*). *A priori* themes are identified as potentially helpful and relevant to the analysis, by corresponding to key concepts and/or perspectives for the research. However, the number of *a priori* themes should usually be limited, and they should

always be used tentatively, and redefined or removed if they do not prove useful.

The first step in Template Analysis is to *become familiar with the data* to be analysed. However, unlike some other approaches, Template Analysis does not require that the entire data set be read in full at this stage. Certainly, in a smaller study (perhaps with ten interview participants) it would be reasonable for the researcher to read through their data in full. However, in larger studies, it is recognised that this may be an excessively challenging and lengthy undertaking – in any case may not be possible in where data collection may be ongoing over some time and analysis planned concurrently with data collection. In a larger study, it would be reasonable for a researcher to familiarise themselves with a subset of the accounts to be analysed as a start.

Next, the researcher undertakes *preliminary coding* using the first item of data (an interview transcript, a set of diary entries or fieldnotes, and so on). Every section of the text that seems to offer something of relevance or contribute to understanding in relation to the research question is highlighted, and the researcher makes a note in the margin summing up what it is that is of interest here. Short code titles should be used to the content of these notes. If *a priori* themes are being used, the researcher should have these listed on a separate sheet to which they can easily refer. Sections of the text that appear to relate to *a priori* themes are also highlighted, and indexed to the relevant theme. *Parallel coding* (classifying the same segment of text under two different codes) is permissible. At this stage, researchers are advised to code inclusively – codes which turn out not to be relevant can always be discarded at a later point.

Although in most styles of thematic analysis it is common to carry out preliminary coding on the full data set before moving to subsequent stages, in Template Analysis it is normal to carry out the early stages of analysis a subset of the data. The aim is to produce an initial version of the template, which

can then be used to code subsequent data and modified in the light of it. The number of transcripts (or other data items) that need to be included in the initial analysis will vary from study to study. As a rule, the more diverse the perspectives and experiences of the sample, the more data will be needed in the initial sub-sample. We would always recommend that the initial sample is as diverse as possible; failure to do this can lead to a ‘skewed’ initial template which does not work well at later stages of the analysis process and which may even need discarding entirely.

The next step towards the initial template is known as *clustering*. Here, the preliminary codes that represent emerging potential themes, plus any *a priori* themes that have proved useful, are grouped together into meaningful clusters. Redundancies amongst them are removed and themes defined more clearly. Hierarchical relationships between themes may begin to be identified, but it is important not to rush to ‘tidy up’ the clusters; experimenting with different ways of capturing the data and relating themes to each other will pay dividends in terms of a robust and nuanced interpretation. We find it helpful to use Post-It notes to try out different ways of clustering themes, with theme names and line numbers indexing text written on them. Of course, researchers may use whatever means they find useful to help maintain an open, creative attitude to the task, which could include the use of specialist qualitative analysis software (CAQDAS: Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software) such as NVivo, Atlas.ti, MAXQDA and many others.

Once the researcher is confident that their clusters are providing a good representation of the sense they are making of the data, analysis moves on to the stage of developing the initial template. This will certainly involve establishing hierarchical relationships between themes (with narrower themes nested within broader ones) and may also include lateral relationships across clusters. Sometimes, certain themes may pervade

much of the data, cross-cutting many or sometimes all of the other distinct thematic clusters: these are referred to as *integrative themes*. While integrative themes are not as widely used (or even permissible) in many other approaches to analysis, identifying themes as integrative rather than treating them simply as another top-level theme can usefully draw attention to ways in which some themes may operate as ‘undercurrents running through participants accounts; often, perhaps, not addressed explicitly but very apparent to the careful reader’ (King, 2012, p. 432). In our own work, when we undertook an evaluation of a service providing end of life care in the home environment, we identified the perceived uniqueness of the service as an integrative theme: seeing the service as unique and special was an undercurrent pervading all other themes identified, indicating respondents’ typical stance towards the service (Brooks & King, 2014).

Once an initial template has been constructed, the researcher’s next task is to apply it to further data, and thereby *modify and develop the template*. The researcher works systematically through the rest of their data, identifying those sections of text that contribute to addressing their research question, marking the text with one (or more) appropriate thematic from their initial template. Where data of interest are not captured by existing themes on the initial template – either because the data is not a ready ‘fit’ or because there is no theme representing this aspect of the data at all – modification of the template is undertaken. Necessary modifications may include inserting new themes, redefining existing themes, or deleting themes entirely where it becomes apparent they are redundant. Rather than reorganising the template after examining each new account, it is common to ‘group’ accounts and to work through these noting possible revisions before constructing an updated template. For example, in a study consisting of twenty interviews, a researcher might choose to design their initial template based on their preliminary coding of

five transcripts, then design an initial template before working through a further five, modify the template, then proceed with another five transcripts and so on.

This iterative process of constructing and trying out successive versions of the template continues until the researcher is convinced that they have a template that provides a rich and comprehensive representation of their interpretation of the data. While such decisions will be unique to each particular piece of research (and in any case practical time and resource constraints will usually play some role in limiting the number of iterations possible), the most important point here is that all sections of the data relevant to the research question should be adequately captured by a *final template*. Once this *final version* has been constructed, the researcher then applies it to their full data set. The final template can be useful in structuring the writing up of a piece of research and can provide a visual reference in dissemination, although it is important to keep in mind that constructing the template itself is not the end point of analysis. The researcher needs to use the coding to the final template to draw together their interpretation of their data. Template Analysis does not specify procedures for this *final interpretation* stage, as the requirements will vary according to the philosophical and/or methodological approach taken. Nevertheless, there are some common strategies that can prove useful. Searching for patterns in themes across cases is often useful – for example, do certain themes tend to dominate (or to be absent from) the accounts of certain types of participants? Prioritisation is essential – it will never be possible to talk about every theme at every level of hierarchy; even if it were, the result would be a report that lacked focus and was drowning in detail. Themes (or groups of themes) that clearly address the research question and feature strongly in participants' accounts are likely to warrant close consideration. Note that simple frequency counts should never be seen as meaningful in and of themselves; what they can do is draw

the researcher's attention to interesting issues to explore further in their data.

Appendix 1 provides an example of a published study that utilises Template Analysis.

Braun and Clarke's Style of Thematic Analysis

In an article that has become a benchmark paper, psychologists Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006) present an accessible and well delineated version of thematic analysis. Their approach is widely referenced in psychology generally and beyond, including in the field of organisational research. Braun and Clarke describe a six-step procedure for undertaking analysis, but are clear that what they provide are suggestions for practice rather than a set of fixed rules. They emphasise that analysis is a recursive rather than a linear process, and that the six phases they describe should be seen as basic precepts to guide researchers. The onus then is on researchers themselves to reflect on how best to apply these to fit their own research question and their data.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), a researcher should be clear from the outset about what type of analysis they are setting out to undertake, and the claims this will enable them to make in relation to their data set, be that a rich description of the entire data set or a detailed account of one particular aspect. Analysis may be *theoretical*, coding for a very specific research question and more explicitly driven by the researcher and their particular concerns. Alternatively, the research question can emerge through the coding process itself: coding can be *inductive* and driven by the data in a bottom up approach to analysis. Braun and Clarke additionally suggest that the focus of an analysis can either be on identifying explicit or what they term *semantic* themes, or on identifying themes at a more interpretative or *latent* level. Their view is that thematic analysis typically focuses exclusively or

primarily on one or other of these options. They stipulate that consistency is key here: what matters is that researchers are explicit about their decisions and their definitions, and consistent about how they apply these in their analysis.

The six steps identified by Braun and Clarke are: (1) becoming familiar with the data; (2) generating initial codes from the data and starting to organise it into meaningful groups (*codes* are defined as a feature of the data that seem interesting to the researcher: they differ from *themes* which represent broader units of analysis); (3) searching for themes (the end result of this stage of analysis is a collection of what Braun and Clarke term *candidate themes* and all data extracts coded to these); (4) reviewing themes (this involves review both at the level of the coded data extracts and at the higher thematic level to produce, at the end of this step, a *candidate thematic map*); (5) defining and naming themes (at the end of this phase, the researcher should be able to clearly define their themes by succinctly describing their scope and content); and finally (6) producing the report.

Appendix 2 provides an example of published work utilising Braun and Clarke's style of thematic analysis.

Framework Analysis

Framework Analysis was developed by Ritchie and Spencer (1994) as a pragmatic approach to the analysis of qualitative data, particularly in applied social policy research. The authors sought to develop a method that was systematic enough to offer rigour and clarity in analysis, but retained flexibility to enable it to be adapted to different types of study. The kind of work in which they were engaged was almost always carried out in teams, so it was important that their method would facilitate team-working in analysis. They also had a strong commitment to an applied orientation that could produce answers

for those commissioning social research. There are five main stages to the approach.

Familiarisation with the data:

Researchers immerse themselves in the data: reading and re-reading transcripts and field notes, listening to recordings of interviews. For larger studies – or those with very tight deadlines – the team may select a sample of the data with which to familiarise themselves; care must be taken to ensure this is from a cross-section of organisational settings, participant types, time periods and so on. Notes should be taken of features of the data that strike researchers as being of interest, but there is no systematic coding at this stage.

Identifying a framework:

On the basis of the work done at the previous stage, researchers develop a framework of themes and subthemes with which to code the full data set. A priori issues that informed the research aims will feed into the framework alongside those emerging from the content of the data. Researchers are advised to keep the framework (which is sometimes referred to as an 'index') relatively simple at this stage, as the contents of the main thematic categories will be elaborated in the latter stages. Commonly there are just two hierarchical levels of themes at this stage.

Indexing:

Here the whole data set is coded (or 'indexed') to the framework developed at stage 2. New themes may be added to the framework at this stage, though the norm is that the framework will be well-developed before indexing starts.

Charting:

Indexed data are moved into 'charts' – essentially tables that cross-reference units of analysis (e.g. individuals, groups, organisations) against themes. The aim is not to simply cut and paste each relevant quote into the appropriate chart; rather, all the material relating to a particular theme for a particular

participant (or other unit of analysis) is distilled into an analytical summary. Units of analysis should be displayed in the same order on each chart, to help facilitate ‘eyeballing’ of the emerging analysis to detect patterns of interest.

Mapping and interpretation:

At this stage, the analyst reviews the charts and all research notes made in the previous stages, looking for patterns in the data and identifying key insights that help address the original research questions. Ritchie and Spencer (1994) emphasise that there is a wide range of strategies available to carry out this task, and success relies on intuition and creativity as much as following procedures. Researchers may variously use activities such as defining concepts, mapping the range of phenomena, developing typologies and so on.

Framework Analysis has been used very extensively in health services research, though much less often in business, management and organisational research. Examples of its use in the latter setting include Gray et al.’s (2011) study of coaching for SME managers, Sturges’ (2008) examination of career self-management, and Osgood’s (2004) research into professionalism amongst early years practitioners. Unfortunately, none of the organisational research studies using Framework Analysis that we identified in the literature provided much detail of their analytic processes; researchers are advised to turn to social policy and health fields for more detailed accounts of this style of analysis in action (e.g. Gale et al., 2013; Ward et al., 2013).

Matrix Analysis

Matrix Analysis (Nadin & Cassell, 2004) is based on the work of Miles and Huberman (1994; see also Miles et al., 2014), and centres on the use of different types of table (or ‘matrix’) to display and develop analysis across cases. There are many different ways

in which matrices may be organised; for example, by time period, to trace chronological developments (e.g. Cassell, 1989), by organisational case examples (e.g. Mahmood-Yousuf et al., 2008) or by data collection method where multiple forms were used in one study (e.g. Kislov et al., 2012). It is common for one study to use several forms of matrix. Matrices tend to present the outcomes of coding at quite a broad, summary level, to enable the researcher – and indeed the reader – to step back and ‘see the wood for the trees’. The style is therefore particularly useful for relatively large studies, especially where multiple cases (such as multiple organisations or job roles) need to be compared and contrasted. There is a risk that case-specific detail may be lost, though it is not uncommon for matrices to be used alongside more fine-grained forms of analysis; indeed, in their original chapter, Nadin and Cassell describe a study where they moved from Template Analysis to Matrix Analysis.

There are rather fewer studies in the literature which identify themselves as principally using Matrix Analysis than the other three styles we have described, though many more draw on some of the ideas initially advocated by Miles and Huberman (1994) in how they organise their data. Articles which explicitly use Nadin and Cassell’s (2004) formulation of Matrix Analysis include Leithold et al.’s (2016) study of new product development in SMEs, which utilised an analytic matrix strongly based on previous research. In contrast, Savage et al.’s (2013) study of logistics in Namibia derived its main analytic matrix in a much more bottom up manner, based on categories emerging from close reading of the interview data.

Comparing Generic Styles of Thematic Analysis

Reading our descriptions above of four different versions of generic thematic analysis, it is very apparent that there is a good deal of

overlap between them. As noted earlier, this is why we prefer to refer to 'styles' rather than 'types'. We argue that these are not distinct and discrete methods of analysis, but rather variations on a common set of key activities: identifying themes, coding data to them, organising them into some kind of structure and producing an interpretation of the data.

Looking at differences between the four styles, there is a clear distinction between Braun and Clarke's version and the other three. Template, Matrix and Framework analyses are all examples of what Crabtree and Miller (1992) call 'codebook' approaches, in which a coding structure is constructed from a mixture of a priori interests and initial exploration of the data, then refined and developed through further application to all the data. Template Analysis arguably emphasises the development of an initial structure from a sample of the data in a stronger manner than the other styles, highlighting the move from 'initial template' to 'developing the template' as a significant transition in the process. In contrast, Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis is typically carried out in a more 'bottom up' way throughout the analytic process, rather than focusing effort on the development of a 'codebook'.

Template Analysis tends to encourage a more fine-grained analysis than the other two 'codebook' styles, mainly through its encouragement of depth of coding – studies using Framework or Matrix analysis rarely code to more than three levels, while it is common for coding relating to the richest and most revealing aspects of the data to extend to four or more levels in Template Analysis. This encourages a high degree of attention to nuance and detail, but the price to pay can be a very complex coding structure and findings that can be difficult to manage in their extent. Indeed, for this reason, Nadin and Cassell (2004) argue for combining Template and Matrix approaches, and give an example of this in their definitive chapter.

The strongest similarity in styles is between Template and Framework Analysis; the

sequence of recommended procedures has a good deal in common, though there are variations in emphasis and focus. Template Analysis places more emphasis on the process of developing the coding structure than Framework Analysis, and as we have seen, marks the production of the initial template as a key step. Conversely, Framework Analysis describes 'charting' and 'mapping' processes that are not essential to Template Analysis (though not in conflict with it). As also noted above, Template Analysis encourages greater depth of coding than Framework Analysis. These two styles evolved in parallel from around the early 1990s to address similar concerns for a flexible but structured approach to analysis in applied qualitative research. The differences between them to a large degree reflect the different disciplinary areas in which they developed, as Brooks et al. (2015) discuss.

Given the overlaps between them, one might question whether there is much purpose to defining specific styles of thematic analysis. There is certainly a danger that when methods are packaged in distinct ways, they encourage researchers to be more concerned about following the procedures correctly than thinking through what is needed for their research. All the same, we feel there are good reasons for qualitative methodologists to offer particular styles of thematic analysis. They help clarify what some of the important choices are for researchers trying to design their own analytic strategy. This is especially true where there is a substantial body of published work that researchers can consult for examples, as is the case for the styles we have discussed (though somewhat less so for Matrix Analysis than the others). Distinct, identifiable styles also aid clarity of communication about analytic procedures, especially in refereed journal articles where often there is very little scope for detailed descriptions of method. Finally, our experience as teachers and supervisors of qualitative research is that it is helpful for novice researchers to have detailed guidelines for analysis that have been well-tested in practice.

CONCLUSION

There is a paradox regarding the place of generic thematic analysis in qualitative research. On the one hand, it continues to be widely used – for example, as we write, Braun and Clarke's (2006) article has received nearly 33,680 citations on Google Scholar. On the other, there is a paucity of critical discussion in the literature – especially in refereed journal articles, which remain the most important medium of publication in the social sciences. We agree with Braun and Clarke (2006) that this lack of critical scholarly attention reflects the relatively low status of thematic analysis, which (despite the advances brought about by their work and that of other authors we have cited here) is still perceptible. Much of the critique of thematic analysis is informal – we find it in offhand comments in conference presentations or everyday dialogue between academic researchers, where 'mere thematic analysis' is dismissed as simplistic, descriptive and philosophically or theoretically ungrounded. There are some critical points that are somewhat developed in the literature and we will attend to these below, before concluding with our view of the strengths of generic thematic analysis for qualitative organisational research.

Proceduralism and Methodolatry

There has been a good deal of discussion of the notion of 'methodolatry' in qualitative research. The term goes back to at least the early 1990s, and refers to a fetishisation of the purity of methods with the implicit assumption that this will in some way guarantee good research. Relating specifically to qualitative research, Janesick (1994, p. 215) defines it as 'a preoccupation with selecting and defending methods to the exclusion of the actual substance of the story being told'. In relation to qualitative analysis, these concerns tend to focus on 'proceduralism', where analysts focus on meticulously following set

procedures rather than responding creatively and imaginatively to data. Because thematic analysis is intrinsically procedural, it is often the focus of such criticisms. Atkinson (2013), for example, laments the deadening effects of fixed formulae and procedures:

Worst of all is the endless, repetitive emphasis on *coding* data. As if ideas were going to emerge from mechanistic trudging through one's data and repeatedly coding it. (p. 58)

Chamberlain (2000) points to the danger of thematic analysis procedures amounting to little more than a descriptive content analysis that simply classifies and illustrates what participants have said with no interpretive depth. On a rather different tack, some advocates of thematic analysis (including the present authors; Brooks et al., 2015) have warned of the danger that researchers become over-concerned with perfecting their thematic structure, rather than seeing it as a means to the end of interpreting the data.

Concerns about proceduralism need to be taken seriously by those writing about and using various forms of thematic analysis. We have certainly seen examples where authors talk about procedures as if simply following them precisely will inevitably produce a successful analysis. However, while any approach that describes a sequence of steps or stages may be interpreted in a mechanistic way, all the authors cited above writing about styles of thematic analysis are explicit that this is not how their guidelines should be used. Equally, we can readily point to numerous good examples of published researching using any of the styles we have discussed that show appropriate flexibility and creativity in how analysis is conducted. There may well be a case for better teaching of thematic analysis, but we do not agree that the fact some people use it poorly means it is inherently flawed.

For those who remain convinced that procedural guidelines will always channel people away from creative and imaginative engagement with data, we would offer a parallel counter-argument. Researchers may choose

to enter the analytic process without any procedures to guide them, but we contend that they would still have a procedure – in that they do a series of things in a particular order to understand and interpret their data. The danger when they do not use any system to guide them is that their ‘procedure’ is haphazard, unreflectively selective and near impossible to report, so that the reader gets little sense of how the researcher got to their destination other than perhaps a vague reference to ‘immersing themselves in the data’. Our argument here is not that this kind of very open approach is necessarily wrong, any more than we accept that following procedural guidelines is wrong; it is simply that any strategy for analysis brings its own risks with it.

Fragmentation of Accounts

A second important critique of thematic analysis is that it leads to a fragmentation of accounts, resulting in analysis that loses the context of the particular circumstances in which data were collected. There are a number of different concerns that lie behind this argument. One is focused on the interactional context, particularly in interviews. Silverman (2013), for example, maintains that the meaning in any segment of talk is bound up in the ongoing interaction between interviewee and interviewer; to remove thematically-coded extracts from the sequence of interaction will inevitably result in an impoverished interpretation. Related to this point is the argument that lack of analytic attention to the interview as interaction results in the interviewer’s part in the production of ‘data’ being neglected. Potter and Hepburn (2005) illustrate how participant quotes are commonly displayed without the inclusion of the interviewer’s question. This can make the participant’s talk appear to be an abstract statement of their position on the topic at hand, rather than a particular answer to a particular question.

Critiques of thematic analysis in terms of the loss of context, above all interactional context,

mostly come from those adopting what we might describe as a language-based position: conversation, discourse or narrative analysis, generally from a constructionist position. This is understandable, as in such approaches the details of interaction and its sequence within a text are crucial. Silverman (2013) argues that attending to such matters is still important in other types of qualitative research, and we would agree. However, we would also stress that the process of narrative construction *per se* is not the main focus of all qualitative traditions – for example phenomenology, grounded theory or realist evaluation. We would argue that good thematic analysis takes notice of context by insisting that the interpretation of individual sections of the data is informed by an understanding of the text (such as an interview transcript) as a whole. Thus in coding a section of text to a theme, the researcher is not just considering that section in a vacuum but is making sense of it in the context of the participant’s whole account.

A further concern about fragmentation is the potential to lose the holistic sense of individual participants’ experiences in cross-case analysis. This is especially an issue for experiential approaches such as phenomenology and personal construct psychology. To an extent this is inevitable in any qualitative study with more than a few participants, but there are strategies that can mitigate the problem. One is to present selected case studies to illustrate different positions within the cross-case analysis, highlighting key themes within these cases. Another is to combine thematic analysis with other forms of analysis that retain the integrity of individual accounts; this kind of methodological pluralism is attracting growing interest in qualitative research (Frost et al., 2010).

Strengths of Thematic Analysis

We argue that despite the critical points discussed above, thematic analysis has some important strengths to offer qualitative

organisational research. First, it provides a useful balance of flexibility and structure for the analyst. As a generic method, with a variety of well-established styles to serve as a starting point, it enables researchers to adapt and develop analytic strategies that fit the needs of their studies. This includes ensuring that philosophical foundations and theoretical orientations are followed through in the detail of analytic procedures, as well as enabling analysis to achieve its desired outcomes. At the same time, the various styles of thematic analysis provide clear (but not rigid) sequences of procedures that can reduce the risk of finding oneself lost in the sheer volume of data that qualitative research produces.

Linked to that last point, thematic analysis can help researchers to see the wood for the trees; that is, to get a sense of what the main messages are in extensive and often complex data. As we mentioned earlier, this ability does not need to be at the expense of retaining a sense of individual positions within the data. In addition, the growing literature on generic thematic analysis helps to provide a common language for sharing methodological insights and reflections, as well as disseminating the findings of such research to a wide audience.

In sum, thematic analysis remains a powerful and flexible tool that used appropriately, facilitates the kind of sensitive, nuanced examination of organisational phenomena that qualitative research seeks to achieve.

APPENDIX 1: AN EXAMPLE OF TEMPLATE ANALYSIS (RADCLIFFE, 2013)

This example comes from an article by Laura Radcliffe, published in *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management* (2013). Her main focus is an evaluation of the use of diaries as a data collection method in the study of how couples manage the complexities of work-life decision-making. Within

this, she provides a substantial example of her own empirical work, including a thorough account of her use of Template Analysis to analyse the diary contents and accompanying interviews.

Radcliffe recruited a diverse sample of 24 heterosexual couples who each completed a diary over a period of 28 days. The diary took an ‘event-contingent’ form (Bolger et al., 2003); that is to say, participants completed an entry every time the target event occurred – in this case, an incident where there was a ‘work-family conflict’. For each such incident, participants completed a semi-structured proforma structured around four broad questions: what the incident was, what they decided to do about it, how they arrived at this decision and what the outcome was. Before the start of the diary period, Radcliffe conducted dyadic in-depth interviews with each couple, to help her get to know them and their circumstances, and to explain what would be required in the diary task. After the diaries were completed, she carried out a telephone interview with each individual participant, checking their understanding of the research and exploring their reactions to participation.

Template Analysis was used to analyse the diary data. Radcliffe cites the utility of the approach for examining different perspectives on a phenomenon as one of the reasons for choosing it, as she needed to make comparisons within and between couples, and look at temporal patterns over the diary collection period. She used four a priori top-level themes, reflecting the focus of her research questions: type of conflict, decision made, reason for decision and outcome of decision. These may be seen as ‘soft’ a priori themes in that they represent quite loose foci for developing the template, rather than tightly-defined theory-driven ‘hard’ themes (King & Brooks, 2017).

In keeping with normal practice, Radcliffe developed her initial template on the basis of close analysis of a subset of her data – in her case the full diary data from both

members of one couple. She describes adding new themes, and moving others within the template; for example, she added the theme *unofficial work agreements* to capture a form of support that she did not observe in her analysis to construct the initial template. In a late iteration of the template, she grouped together the themes *availability of support, job requirements and expectations*, and *financial considerations* in a broad top-level theme of *enabling and constraining factors*. It is quite rare for journal article authors to provide such detail of template development beyond the initial version, and she is to be commended for helping the reader gain a grasp of this key aspect of Template Analysis. Even more useful, though, is her illustration of how she captured the temporal nature of her diary data. All too often this is not addressed in a very adequate way in thematic analysis of any kind. Radcliffe uses flow chart diagrams of each individual conflict, with each box capturing a distinct comment (or set of comments) in the diary as the episode unfolded. Key themes from the template are indexed on the charts at relevant places. This strategy enables her to make comparisons between participants in a couple or across time, and link these specific instances to the broader Template Analysis.

APPENDIX 2: AN EXAMPLE OF BRAUN AND CLARKE'S STYLE OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS (LANGENHAN ET AL., 2013)

Langenhan et al. (2013) used Braun and Clarke's (2006) style of thematic analysis to explore different stakeholder perspectives regarding the extent to which psychosocial risks are incorporated into strategic risk management practice at both the business and policy level. Langenhan et al. acknowledge 'risk' as being conceptualised rather differently in different contexts, but for the

purposes of their own work, they draw on previous definitions identifying risk as 'an effect of uncertainty on objectives' (p. 87). They describe psychosocial risks as representing a new and emerging notion of 'risk' for organisations, relating to issues such as work-related stress, violence, bullying and harassment. According to Langenhan and her colleagues, managing psychosocial risks effectively alleviates many of the known negative consequences of stress which affect productivity, constitute a threat to the viability of organisations and have large implications for the national health and benefit costs to wider society. Strategic risk management, as understood by Langenhan et al., involves the identification, assessment and prioritisation of risks, followed by the allocation of resources to minimise, monitor and control the likelihood and consequences of these. Risks are therefore not necessarily eliminated: the focus is often rather on identifying risks most associated with negative outcomes and addressing and managing these. Stakeholders in this process are understood to be multiple and broadly defined.

Langenhan and colleagues used qualitative methods so that they could fully explore the varying understandings and application of this new and emerging concept, and they used the guidelines provided by Braun and Clarke (2006) to thematically analyse their data. They recruited fourteen participants, which included a range of stakeholders they considered as 'key' in relation to their research. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four participants representing four different employer organisations, five 'experts' (with 'national or international experience, or knowledge of general and psychosocial risk in business and/or policy making'), three policy makers and two trade unionists.

Four main themes are identified: understanding of risk, understanding psychosocial risks, barriers and opportunities. Each theme includes subthemes, and succinct descriptions of each subtheme are included in the article.

Langenhan et al.'s article presents some useful insights for those working with the relatively new notion of psychosocial risk in the field of risk management. They suggest their findings reflect a need to close the gap between policy and practice in relation to psychosocial risk management, and that erroneous and inaccurate understandings of psychosocial risk often mean that management of such risks are a low priority for organisations. Their use of Braun and Clarke's style of thematic analysis evidently facilitated the extraction of key themes related to the topic which are each individually elucidated and linked into a convincing overarching narrative, effectively evidenced by participant quotes.

REFERENCES

- Atkinson, P. (2013). Ethnography and craft knowledge. *Qualitative Sociology Review* 9(2), 56–63.
- Bolger, N., Davis, A. and Rafaeli, E. (2003). Diary methods: Capturing life as it is lived. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 54(1), 579–616.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, J. (2013). *Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners*. London: Sage.
- Brooks, J. and King, N. (2014). *Doing Template Analysis: Evaluating an End of Life Care Service*. Sage Research Methods Cases. Available at: <http://methods.sagepub.com/case/doing-template-analysis-evaluating-an-end-of-life-care-service>.
- Brooks, J., McCluskey, S., Turley, E. and King, N. (2015). The utility of template analysis in qualitative psychology research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 12(2), 202–22.
- Cassell, C. (1989). *The use of information technology in the community: An evaluation*. PhD Thesis, University of Sheffield.
- Chamberlain, K. (2000). Methodolatry and qualitative health research. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 5(3), 285–96.
- Corbin, J. and Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 3rd edn. London: Sage.
- Crabtree, B.F. and Miller, W.L. (1992). A template approach to text analysis: Developing and using codebooks. In B.F. Crabtree and W.L. Miller (eds.), *Doing Qualitative Research* (pp. 93–109). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Frost, N., Nolas, S.-M., Brooks-Gordon, B., Esin, C., Holt, A., Shinebourne, P. and Mehdi-zadeh, L. (2010). Pluralism in qualitative research: The impact of different researchers and qualitative approaches on the analysis of qualitative data. *Qualitative Research*, 10(4), 441–460.
- Gale, N.K., Heath, G., Cameron, E., Rashid, S. and Redwood, S. (2013). Using the framework method for the analysis of qualitative data in multi-disciplinary health research. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 13: 117, available at www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2288/13/117
- Gray, D.E., Ekinci, Y. and Goregaokar, H. (2011). Coaching SME managers: Business development or personal therapy? A mixed methods study. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 22(4), 863–82.
- Janesick, V.J. (1994). The dance of qualitative research design: Metaphor, methodolatry, and meaning. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 209–19). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Johnson, P., Buehring, A., Cassell, C. and Symon, G. (2006). Evaluating qualitative management research: Towards a contingent criteriology. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 8(3), 131–56.
- King, N. (2012). Doing template analysis. In G. Symon and C. Cassell (eds.), *Qualitative Organizational Research: Core Methods and Current Challenges* (pp. 426–50). London: Sage.
- King, N. and Brooks, J. (2017). *Template Analysis for Business and Management Students*. London: Sage.
- King, N. and Horrocks, C. (2010). *Interviews in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
- Kislov, R., Walshe, K. and Harvey, G. (2012). Managing boundaries in primary care service improvement: A developmental approach to communities of practice. *Implementation*

- Science*, 7:97. Available at: <http://implementationscience.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1748-5908-7-97>
- Langenhan, M., Leka, S. and Jain, A. (2013). Psychosocial risks: Is risk management strategic enough in business and policy-making? *Safety and Health at Work*, 4(2), 87–94.
- Leithold, N., Woschke, T., Haase, H. and Kratzer, J. (2016). Optimising NPD in SMEs: A best practice approach. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, 23(1), 262–84.
- Mahmood-Yousuf, K., Munday, D., King, N. and Dale, J. (2008). Interprofessional relationships and communication in primary palliative care: Impact of the Gold Standards Framework. *British Journal of General Practice*, 58(549), 256–63.
- Miles, M.B. and Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*, 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miles, M.B., Huberman, A.M. and Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 3rd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Nadin, S. and Cassell, C. (2004). Using data matrices. In C. Cassell and G. Symon (eds.), *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research* (pp. 271–87). London: Sage.
- Osgood, J. (2004). Time to get down to business? The responses of early years practitioners to entrepreneurial approaches to professionalism. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 2(1), 5–24.
- Potter, J. and Hepburn, A. (2005). Qualitative interviews in psychology: Problems and possibilities. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2(4), 281–307.
- Radcliffe, L.S. (2013). Qualitative diaries: Uncovering the complexities of work-life decision-making. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 8(2), 163–80.
- Ritchie, J. and Spencer, L. (1994). Qualitative data analysis for applied policy research. In A. Bryman and R.G. Burgess (eds.), *Analysing Qualitative Data* (pp. 173–94). London: Routledge.
- Savage, C.J., Fransman, L. and Jenkins, A.K. (2013). Logistics in Namibia: Issues and challenges. *Journal of Transport and Supply Chain Management* 7(1), Art. #86, 8 pages. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/jtscm.v7i1.86>.
- Silverman, D. (2013). What counts as qualitative research? Some cautionary comments. *Qualitative Sociology Review*, 9(2), 48–55.
- Smith, J., Flowers, P. and Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method, Research*. London: Sage.
- Sturges, J. (2008). All in a day's work? Career self-management and the management of the boundary between work and non-work. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 18(2), 118–34.
- Symon, G. and Cassell, C. (2012). Assessing qualitative research. In G. Symon and C. Cassell (eds.), *Qualitative Organizational Research: Core Methods and Current Challenges* (pp. 204–23). London: Sage.
- Tracy, S.J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight 'big tent' criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10), 837–51.
- Ward, D.J., Furber, C., Tierney, S. and Swallow, V. (2013). Using Framework Analysis in nursing research: A worked example. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 69(11), 2423–31.
- Yardley, L. (2008). Demonstrating validity in qualitative psychology. In J. Smith (ed.), *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods*. 2nd ed. (pp. 235–51). London: Sage.

PART II

Visual Methods



This page intentionally left blank

Photography in Qualitative Organizational Research: Conceptual, Analytical and Ethical Issues in Photo-Elicitation Inspired Methods¹

Samantha Warren

INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses what Meyer et al. (2013, p. 513) refer to as the ‘dialogical approach’ in visual research – where images (in this case photographs²) are used as a way for researchers and participants to *generate* data rather than images as artefacts for ‘archaeological analysis’ (ibid, p. 502) in and of themselves – for example, those produced by organizations for strategic purposes such as advertisements, in brochures, on websites and as part of company annual reports.³ The methods I discuss below fall under the broad umbrella of ‘photo-elicitation’ (Collier & Collier, 1986) which encompass variations including ‘photo-voice’ (Wang & Burris, 1997), respondent/ participant-led photo-interviewing (Warren, 2002; Shortt & Warren, 2012; Vince & Warren, 2012) and native-image making (Wagner, 1979). All have slight nuances, but generally involve either the researcher or the study participants making,⁴ selecting, sharing, viewing and discussing photographs that are specifically

generated for the needs of the project (Hurworth, 2003). A common concern from colleagues intrigued by – but also fearful of – using photographs in research is that there is no robust theoretical foundation from which to justify their use. However, ‘the image’ has exercised just about every philosopher and influential thinker from antiquity to (post) modern times (Warren, 2016) and contemporary essays on photography abound in disciplines such as art history, film, media and cultural studies as well as anthropology and the social sciences. These have already provided a firm base for organizational scholars to draw on, albeit in a disparate and rather scattered way, so in this chapter, my aim is to bring together multidisciplinary, conceptual and theoretical insights with empirical examples of photographic organization studies and reflection from my own visual research experience over the past 16 years. I hope it will be an inspiration to readers who are curious to know more about how to incorporate photography into their own qualitative research practice.

For the first time in organizational research methods literature, this volume includes an entire section on visual methods, which shows how far the field of visual methodology has matured in business and management studies in recent years (Davison et al., 2012). It also means that each chapter need not map out the general terrain of visual and image-based research before getting into more nuanced methodological discussion. With this in mind, I turn directly to discussing the heritage of, and drivers for, the use of photography in business, management and organizational research before outlining some pertinent issues to consider when planning a photo-elicitation inspired research project. Next, I discuss how photographic methods enhance qualitative organizational research, before discussing the data analysis and research ethics issues related to their use.

PHOTOGRAPHIC QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS: HERITAGE AND DRIVERS

Sociology and anthropology have used photography to generate data about social and cultural settings, almost from photography's inception (Becker, 1974). However, as the social sciences became increasingly focused on quantitative methods and positivistic 'natural science' principles during the early to mid twentieth century (Buchanan & Bryman, 2009), photographs fell out of favour as scientific data, on account of their polysemic qualities. It is hard to pin down the meaning of a photograph and claim any kind of objectivity for it, for instance (Becker, 1974). This may go some way to explaining why organization studies – and particularly business and management research – has been slow to take up visual research in general, but especially photography since our disciplines sought to emulate the positivistic/objectivist methods of early social science. Hedges and Beynon's (1982) and Harper's (1986) photographic

studies of UK and US manufacturing are two early examples that buck this trend, having more in common with photo-journalism than the 'management studies' of the time. A handful of organization/work related articles using photography appear in the early 2000s (e.g. Gallo, 2002 and Buchanan, 2001) but it was not until the twenty-first century is well underway that interest really seems to pick up as part of a broader 'visual turn' (Bell & Davison, 2013). Strangleman (2012) gives a good overview of the relationship between photography and work from the perspective of a sociologist investigating labour processes, and literature reviews of 'the visual and organization' more generally can be found in Bell and Davison (2013) and Ray and Smith (2012). Davison and Warren (2009, 2017) also map the field of visual studies in accounting. Yet despite a growing 'instructional' methodological literature on photo-elicitation methods (e.g. Vince & Warren, 2012; Warren, 2009), there are still relatively few published empirical studies *using* photo-elicitation methods.

I contend this will soon change, however, as journals become more receptive to photography-based work,⁵ and doctoral projects come to fruition (e.g. Betts, 2015; Mørgensen, 2012; Shortt, 2010; Warnes, 2015; Watts, 2014). Furthermore, an increasingly visually mediated, organizational world coupled with new technological capabilities has led to the conceptual, empirical and methodological conditions for photography to be taken seriously in business and management studies. This is itself part of a broader turn towards the visual occurring across a range of disciplines at the turn of the twenty-first century (Bell & Davison, 2013). As noted above, I do not intend to further review these developments here and would direct the reader to Davison and Warren (2009), Puyou et al. (2012), Bell and Davison (2013), Ray and Smith (2012), Meyer et al. (2013) and Bell et al. (2014) for varied and wide-ranging coverage. *inVisio: The International Network for Visual Studies in Organizations* is a useful

resource too, with an online repository of advice and guidance for visual researchers in the business and management disciplines (www.moodle.in-visio.org). For this chapter, what's significant is that photography is a qualitative research method whose time has come and the visual organization studies field has developed sufficiently to warrant a chapter in this *Handbook* dedicated to the practice of researching with a camera.

DESIGNING A PHOTOGRAPHIC RESEARCH PROJECT: PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Photo-elicitation techniques all involve reflection and/or discussion about a set of photographs made to communicate a topic of interest to researchers and/or the communities they are working with (e.g. Wang & Burris, 1997). The photographs could be made by the researcher, participant or a combination of the two – with participants directing a researcher (or even a professional photographer) towards certain shots and scenes (Ray & Smith, 2012). Once the photographs have been gathered, a further research encounter takes place, to allow the photographer(s) or participant director(s) to elaborate further on their choice of shot, modes of expression, motivations, experiences and anything else that arises for them in dialogue with the researcher. These could be during one-to-one interviews (e.g. Shortt, 2015; Slutskaya et al., 2012; Warren, 2008) or in a group setting (Buchanan, 2001).

Camera Equipment and Photographic Formats

Early photo-elicitation studies used single-use disposable cameras, but these are now relatively hard to come by and it is expensive to get the film processed. Nowadays, it is more common to ask participants to use their own

photographic equipment, which would probably be a smartphone or personal digital camera. However, using film cameras does mean that it is not possible for anyone to see the photographs as they are made, which prevents editing, manipulation or the remaking of shots to get the 'perfect' photograph. This may not be an issue where the research is investigating abstract concepts where the photographs are intended to be symbolic or metaphorical aids to expression during an interview (e.g. see Watts, 2014), but might be significant in a study looking at a particular time-frame or event, for example. Next, a decision needs to be taken as to whether to view the images digitally on a screen, or print the photographs as physical artefacts. This may seem insignificant, but there are a number of analytical affordances of both approaches I will discuss later in the section on 'analysis'.

Photographic Storage and Organization

For publication, files sizes of around only 500Kb (360 × 360 dpi) are sufficient, yet some cameras on high quality settings (which are often the manufacturer's default) generate image files of 5gb or more in size.⁶ There are now free plug-ins and apps for most operating systems to resize images quickly and easily on a personal computer (such as Microsoft's Image Resizer tool), thereby preventing excessive storage requirements or difficulties in transferring files between computers. The way in which images are categorized and stored in your personal filing system is also a point to consider as such things can be time consuming to change. Will the files (or hard copy images) be saved in the order in which the participant made them? Or a different arrangement that makes more sense to you as a researcher (such as by code or location)? Pink (2013) reminds us that how information is archived affects the ways in which we remember events, and the meaning that might then be attached to the images and sets of images after

time has passed. This last statement hints at the value of photography in qualitative research – to generate and communicate meaning in ways that go beyond a researcher's traditional repertoire of text-based methods, a discussion to which I now turn.

PHOTOGRAPHY AS A PERFORMATIVE METHOD

A camera encourages its user to be more aware of the world around them since they are making active choices about what's important and significant enough to record (Sontag, 1979, p. 4). These choices are infused with the photographer's 'there and then' motivation for choosing that particular shot, but they also draw in personal and cultural historical precedents about what counts as a 'good' photograph (Burgin, 1986), and imaginings of what the photographer thinks he or she is likely to want to be reminded of when viewing the photograph in the future (Crang, 1997). Photography is therefore a *performative* practice because it involves the storying and enactment of the photographer's journey through time and space for later consumption, rather than the more straightforward documentation of reality that is commonly assumed as the character of everyday photography (Bramming et al., 2012; Hölm, 2008).

Researching Process: Issues of Space and Time

The ease with which photographs can be made at set intervals, or at sites that have undergone change makes photography a useful tool in 'freeze framing' process. Buchanan's (2001) study of operations in a hospital made use of researcher-produced photographs which were then viewed and discussed by groups of hospital staff to investigate the effectiveness of the 'patient trail' from admission to wards. A major problematic of process theories of

organization is the extent to which you can halt the ongoing flux in order to study it (De Cock & Sharp, 2007), and I would argue that contextual discussions 'beyond the frame' of the photograph can help in this regard. For example, Buchanan's photographs were familiar enough to the hospital staff to enable meaningful discussion, but as they were made from the researcher's perspective they also sparked questions about why he had not photographed scenes and settings that were deemed to be significant but missing.

Removed Observation

Asking participants to make photographs is potentially less intrusive than a more traditional ethnography, yet subsequent discussions of these photographs still generate rich and detailed data. Participants in Shortt's (2010) ethnography of hair salons, for example, made photographs to show the importance of 'off-stage' spaces such as cupboards, corridors, alleyways and stairs – places the researcher would not have thought to go herself. These 'liminal' locations had largely been ignored in organizational space research, so using photographs generated a whole new way of thinking about the topic (Shortt, 2015). Likewise, Warnes' (2015) participants photographically represented elements of their unusual workspace (a UK cathedral) to show how they navigated the tensions between the sacred and increasingly more commercial uses of the building.

Agenda-Setting

Qualitative researchers are usually particularly interested in investigating what is important to research participants from *their* perspective and so allowing them to choose what to make photographs of (or direct us to make them) is also an excellent way of focusing the research agenda on what matters to them, rather than us (Wang & Burris, 1997;

Warren, 2005a). In health and social care, for example (for a review, see Catalani & Minkler, 2010), there are many studies that utilize photographs generated by study participants to chart their progress through the agencies they must interact with as a result of severe illness, e.g. Frith and Harcourt's (2007) study of undergoing chemotherapy among breast cancer patients.

PHOTOGRAPHS CONVEY HIDDEN AND/OR ALTERNATIVE KNOWLEDGES

Asking people to 'select' small parcels from their world to turn into photographs, requires them to draw on a variety of conscious and unconscious cultural knowledges around how best to frame and compose their photographs (Burgin, 1986). What we deem significant enough to make pictures of, position and size of the main subject in the photograph, use of (a)symmetry, camera angle and so on, are conditioned by the photographer's visual culture we have been raised within (Berger, 1972; Shortt & Warren, 2012). A salient outcome of this is that we should not regard photographs within the research process as truth, or evidence of a reality that is objectively 'out there' just ready to be snapped up by the camera's lens (Goldstein, 2007). Nonetheless, photographs remain very seductive as 'proof' in everyday life, e.g. passports, driving licences, student IDs, etc., so it is easy to forget that we are dealing with a socially constructed artefact. Photographs have a striking resemblance to reality (as opposed to say, a drawing of the same scene) and we have learned to regard them as 'evidence'.

Photographs as Truth?

The status of the image as either 'true' or 'false' is a charge that visual researchers often have to defend against sceptical reviewers more used to dealing with text (see

Wagner, 2001 for a debate on realism in photographic research). We need to remember that such accusations are usually motivated by an assumption that there *is* a truth to the photograph that we can 'get at' if only the participant is prevented from 'interfering' in the process. However, photographs' fluid meanings are precisely why they are so good at surfacing research participants' subjectivities – even if they are digitally or otherwise manipulated. Croghan et al. (2008) include a thoughtful discussion of the ways in which photography can be used by participants to quite deliberately craft certain identities to present to the researcher, as has also been established about the visual presentation of identity on Facebook (Uimonen, 2013). I advocate that we see this as a strength for qualitative research – and particularly that which is constructivist in character – since the process by which images are made, remade, cropped, altered and adjusted by the photographer can be explored with them as part of the research process.⁷ This might include asking questions about the underpinning – and often emotional – motivations behind the participant's choices of subject, shot, angle, framing and so on, mining for additional layers of data (Warren, 2002).

Interrogating the Photographic Process

Particularly from a psychoanalytical viewpoint, organizational life is riddled with people's unconscious drives and defences that shape their behaviour (Armstrong, 2004; Gabriel, 1999). Questioning how and why particular photographs were made can encourage what is below the photographer's 'surface' to rise up for analysis (Sievers, 2007; Warren, 2012a). An example of this from my own research is given in Figure 15.1, drawn from a study of professional identity and stereotype resistance among early career accountants (see Parker & Warren *in press*; Warren & Parker 2009). Participants were asked to make



Figure 15.1

a set of ten photographs – five that communicated ‘this is me’ and five to show ‘this is not me’. These were later discussed with the researcher. Figure 15.1 was a ‘not me’ photograph made by Martin,⁸ a gregarious young man in his late twenties, to show me how surprised he felt to have ended up working in a corporate environment in the City of London instead of using his accounting skills in a smaller firm, with a social agenda, perhaps.

However, when I questioned him about why he’d shot the photograph from behind the plants outside the frontage instead of directly from the street, Martin explained how it was against company policy to photograph the buildings and so he hid to avoid detection by security guards. He then went on to talk at some length about feeling highly controlled and treated with suspicion by his organization for who he was (i.e. not conforming to others’ stereotypical perceptions of accountants). He agreed that this picture was a good symbol of these feelings – as well as a more straightforward depiction of his company premises.

The Photograph as Aesthetic Communication

The photograph in Figure 15.1 was a conduit for Martin’s more emotional knowledge about his situation because the aesthetic dimensions of the image (camera angle, composition and framing, etc.) caught my attention and prompted me to explore this further with him. Aesthetic feelings are also hard to express in words, so researching these dimensions to organizational life demands a more sensually redolent method, which is where photographs can be especially useful (Strati, 1999; Warren, 2008). Photographs bring the viewer into a direct and forceful relationship with what is depicted and act almost as proxies for the object/scene in question. They fire our senses through imaginings of what it might be like to be there (Pink, 2009, p. 101; Warren, 2012b). Watts (2014), in her research on stress among women police officers in the UK, used photography as a ‘surrogate’ for her participants’ bodily experiences of stress

to encourage them to move away from the more rational ‘common sense’ reconstructions encouraged by interview dialogue alone. This immersive quality means photographs hold ‘information’ beyond what they straightforwardly represent. Yet, despite the personal and subjective nature of photographs, their technical and ‘representational’ character nonetheless renders them useful as documentary methods – subject to the caveats I include in the discussion below.

PHOTOGRAPHS INCLUDE A LOT OF DETAIL: THE ‘INVENTORY FUNCTION’

Some of the earliest scientific uses of photography can be found in anthropology, for example Bateson and Mead’s (1942) famous study of the Trobriand Islanders in which photographs were ‘taken’ to document the differences between the islanders’ bodies, dress, adornments and rituals from those of ‘the West’. The photographs were intended to be ‘accurate’ representations of ‘how it was’ on the Trobriand Islands and in common with much anthropology and sociology of the time, the value of photography was assumed to be in its capacity to record enormous amounts of detail in an instant (Collier & Collier, 1986). Subsequent writing on photography has been quite critical of this ‘realist tale’ (Harper, 1998, p. 26), recognizing the constructed character of a photograph as I discussed earlier (e.g. see Becker, 1974; Harper, 1998; Scott, 1999).

Nonetheless, it is still true to say that film (and now digital) cameras remain great recording devices for qualitative researchers for taking an inventory of the scenes they are confronted with (Collier & Collier, 1986), or as aide memoires from the field (Pink, 2013): ‘photographs ... minimally claim to be true in that what they show actually existed in front of the camera for at least the time it took to make the exposure’ (Becker, 1974, p. 14; see also Barrett, 2006, pp. 162–73 for a good discussion of this).

Photographs as Historical Records

Moreover, photographs are ‘inventories’ that last. They are enduring representations of the past which allow ‘windows’ onto how photographers chose to construct working life at the time. Parker (2009) sees great possibilities in company photographic archives for qualitative research agendas that elicit views from organizational stakeholders (past and present) about historical events and change. In juxtaposing historical photographs with contemporary visual expectations, the differences between our present cultural milieu and the visual cultures of the past seems all the more striking and easy to talk about (Sørensen, 2014). Strangleman’s (2012) research on the Guinness Brewery site in West London, UK, used archival photos with interviewees ‘as a prompt to memory, as ways of understanding corporate image making. Further they allow[ed] us to understand how work was done, how it was valued and portrayed’ (Strangleman, 2012, p. 4.2). Likewise, Bell (2012) undertook a visual analysis of her photographs of the Coventry Jaguar plant’s closure in the UK to highlight processes of ‘memorialization’ by workers. Helms-Mills (2005) also investigated archival photographs from the annual reports of a Canadian utility company. Although in this case she carried out a content analysis to make inferences from the photographs about gender and change within the firm over time, she could easily have used the photographs for elicitation with stakeholders instead.

Photographs as Triggers and Visual/Material Fieldnotes

In research projects with contemporary timeframes, the ‘inventory’ function of photographs can also direct the researcher’s attention to detail hitherto unnoticed by the participant as in my question to Martin about ‘hiding’ in the plants depicted by Figure 15.1



Figure 15.2

(see also Shortt & Warren, 2012). This makes photographs ideal for exploring the minutiae of lived experience at work. Betts (2015), Halford (2004), Parker and Warren (2012), Shortt (2010) and Warren (2006) have all used photo-elicitation methods to help research participants express personal and professional identities through making photographs of objects from their material environments. Bramming et al.'s (2012) study of Danish teachers and their perceptions of what constitutes a 'good day at work'; Slutskaya et al.'s (2012) project on masculinities and skills in butchery in the UK; and Molotch and McClain's (2008) research on resistance with New York subway workers all hinged on the small details identified and discussed from participant-produced photographs. In addition, the 'inventory function' of photography reduces the time-consuming and potentially challenging need to write down details of a scene in a traditional field note journal (Collier & Collier, 1986), e.g. recording the detail included in Figure 15.2!⁹

PHOTOGRAPHS PRESENT HOLISTIC IMPRESSIONS

Following on from the 'inventory' function of photographs discussed above, images also communicate meaning as an integrated whole as well as through their detail. In Figure 15.2, the overall effect of the messy (busy?) office on the viewer is more than just noting all the items on all the desks, for example. The configuration of the room, the type of furniture, colour scheme all 'say' something about what happens there, how, why and by whom, regardless of whether we know it for certain or not.

Presentational Symbolism

Using a photograph displayed in a graduate recruitment brochure, Hancock (2005) explains that we cannot reduce the photograph's impression(s) to just one or a few of its features, since an image is an *integrated* regime of signifying resources – parts that



Figure 15.3

perform as an ensemble of their constituent parts (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Trying to describe the photograph's effect on us using language alone is hard – if not impossible – to do because we apprehend the elements of photographs¹⁰ simultaneously, rather than in the linear manner that language requires. Langer (1957) refers to this as 'presentational symbolism'. This is especially so for abstract or particularly aesthetically rich photographs as in Figure 15.3 (taken from the workplace fun study), which seem to 'speak' to us on a level that is different to logical/rational comprehension. Meyer et al. (2013, p. 491) describe this as the 'visual mode of meaning'. Looking at this image, it is just about apparent that an office of some kind is depicted, with two computer monitors, a desk, a person sitting with his/her back to us, with a backpack and a take-away drinks cup resting on a long table in the foreground. But what is more striking about this image are the 'zoomed out', stretched and blurry aesthetic effects the photographer has added somehow which lends the scene a dream-like, intoxicated, or

perhaps futuristic air. It is much harder to break these down into the precise details within the image that triggers them – and, one might argue, superfluous to do so.

Photographs as Dissemination: Images and Text

It is for these reasons that photographs can be very useful in the dissemination of research as well as vehicles for generating data. Both Barthes (1982) and Ranci  re (2007) have made claims for the peculiar character of photographs to arrest us on what feels to be a pre-conscious, aesthetic and/or emotional level – Barthes with his concept of the 'punctum' and Ranci  re's notion of 'silent speech'. We might be able to explain why a photograph strikes an emotional chord with us, but this is always a post hoc rationalization after the event of apprehending it, and the image itself exceeds our ability to capture it in language as Langer (1957) attests. An alternative view is that there is no such thing as a photograph without



"...we had a laugh on the micro scooter a while back, we got told off by the site services guy, [because] we had a race around the [department] with the micro scooter. There was only one person on it but there was a crash and it all got really ugly! [LAUGHING] ...we got a whiteboard and somebody with a stopwatch and we had to go round the circuit and see who could do it quickest. And about half way through one of the site services guys came round - who's a very very miserable man and has no joy... and someone was going a bit too quick to make the corner and did a huge sort of like falling action over the settees and stuff [MIMES SLOW MOTION FALLING] over the end and this guy jumped out and said 'Stop! Health and Safety!' and we were all [MUCH LAUGHTER!], we dissolved into fits of laughter on the floor and er so the most the biggest laugh I've ever had in the office came out of the micro scooter."

Figure 15.4

words – even if an image is not captioned, it is through language that we try to understand its features and make it have meaning for us (Burgin, 1986; Scott, 1999). Thus the way in which a photograph ‘speaks for itself’ will differ depending on the attributes of the viewer and the context in which it is viewed and is fundamentally a political process (Berger, 1972). A photograph hung in a gallery could claim itself as ‘art’ (and therefore of value), whereas the same photograph appearing on an Instagram feed probably couldn’t (and is therefore worthless).

In my own work, I have found Mitchell’s (1994) threefold classification of the relationship between images and/or text to be very helpful (Warren, 2002, 2008). He uses the label ‘image/text’ to describe a separation between an image and accompanying text, for example the kind of caption seen below the photos included in this chapter; ‘image-text’ to denote an assemblage of image and text whose relation to one another is not explicitly stated but alluded to so that the viewer/reader takes meaning from both that is greater than

or different from either alone (e.g. see Matilal & Höpfl, 2009); and ‘image-text’ as a name for photo-montages or photo-essays where the images are left uncaptioned to ‘speak for themselves’ (although note Scott’s (1999) caveat above). As Marcus (1995) notes, these ‘messy texts’ are often frustrating for the viewer who is unsure what they should take from them and are more usually used in the art-world than research reports. That said, in some critical research, the aim is often to provoke uncertainty or discomfort in viewers/readers and so this might be a useful dissemination approach or even method for generating new insights through the juxtaposition of images (Sørensen, 2014). The example shown in Figure 15.4 is drawn from my research on workplace fun (Warren, 2005b) and is an example of what I refer to as an ‘image-text’. The text is much more than a captioning of the image (as would be the case with an image/text arrangement), but the image is also more than just an illustration of the text. The images and the text add something to one another and although the relationship

between the two is not explicitly spelled out (we are left to assume that the scribbled-on whiteboard depicted is what the story refers to, for example), it is also not confusing, as might be the case with an image-text.

MAKING AND SHARING PHOTOGRAPHS ENHANCES FIELD RELATIONSHIPS

Earning research participants' trust and 'buy-in' is an important precursor to generating rich qualitative data (e.g., see Ch.6, volume 1). Gaining access to occupational communities and building a sample are also challenges for qualitative researchers given the time and commitment usually required for an interview, ethnographic or other reflexive study (Neyland, 2008). Yet Shortt (2015) found herself with a waiting list of willing participants when she undertook photo-interviewing with hairdressers working in UK salons, because the research was regarded by the hairdressers as fun to take part in and several approached the researcher themselves asking to be involved.

Involvement and Immersion in the Task

As well as being enjoyable, photography offers the participant a greater degree of control and creativity than is possible in traditional (verbal) interview-based studies. As noted above, they can set the agenda for subsequent discussion by making or directing the photographs themselves. The 'directing' approach was used by Ray and Smith (2010) in their investigation of how organizational strategy is translated into practice, because although participants were willing to tell the researchers what they should make photographs of, for various reasons they did not wish to do so themselves. This highlights how photo-elicitation techniques allow

participants discretion over what they are happy to reveal about their working lives, showing a view from their world. In my own practice with participant-made photographs, I have found this translates into a high level of commitment to the research agenda with care taken over composition of shots and reports that participants enjoyed the process and the level of reflection it entailed.¹¹ For example, in Figure 15.5 – from the accountant's stereotype resistance research mentioned earlier, a plate of different coloured dried pulses resembling a pie chart was painstakingly assembled in order to show me that its creator was 'not a beancounter'! This evidently took a lot of time and thought and conveys a playful sense of irony around the participant's views.

The 'photo-voice' variant of photo-elicitation methods (Wang & Burris, 1997), is particularly concerned with foregrounding the experiences and views (literally) of disenfranchised or otherwise powerless individuals and groups in society. It was developed in health and social care, but is also very commonly used in participatory community research and is explicitly intended to bring about change (Hergenrather et al., 2010), often through exhibitions or other presentations back to those in positions of power. Kramer et al.'s (2010) project to tackle obesity in a US community involved policy-makers to suggest venues for exhibiting the participants' images as well as in joint viewings of them with the research team, for instance. The principle of raising the 'voice' of marginalized groups by attempting to 'see the world through their eyes' has resonances with the critical management studies project that also explicitly attends to the quieter, overlooked, oppressed or exploited members of organizations (Warren, 2005a). Studies include Gallo's (2002) research with immigrant workers, and Mizen's (2005) study of child workers in the UK. As with process research above, there are a wealth of articles beyond organization studies to consult for inspiration, and which offer great potential for organizational research with an emancipatory agenda (see Catalani & Minkler, 2010).



Figure 15.5

Helping Abstract and/or Sensitive Discussions

Interviewing with photographs also connects researcher and participant over a concrete artefact that can help lubricate conversation (Vince & Warren, 2012). The image can facilitate the sharing of abstract emotions and empathy surrounding sensitive topics (e.g. Scarles, 2010) or as Parker (2009, p. 1119) notes, it can act as a ‘third party’ between researcher and researched putting a safe distance between them in the event of discomfort or embarrassment. A photograph has an ‘immediate’ character which is a combination of its perceived realism and presentational symbolism, both discussed above, and which strikes an emotional chord with the viewer (Barthes, 1982). As such, photographs are well suited to evoking emotional responses on sensitive subjects that may be hard to express in language – such as redundancy or bullying perhaps – or are far from the researcher’s experience – such as homelessness. Slutskaya et al. (2012) found that their working class, male participants were

more willing to open up about emotional or seemingly gendered dimensions of butchery (such as the aesthetics of preparing the meat display or love of the job) when asked to make and discuss photographs. More acutely, in Scarles’ (2010) study of the ethics of tourist photography, the affective power of a participant’s photograph depicting child poverty precipitated an emotional exchange between participant and researcher that repudiated the need for a verbal one. This rests on the photograph’s ability to ‘speak’ alternative languages as discussed earlier.

HOW CAN PHOTOGRAPHS BE ANALYSED AS PART OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PROJECTS?

So far, I have concentrated discussion on the benefits photography brings to a qualitative research project. I have been keen to stress that photographic research is a performative, active practice involving making, viewing and sharing photographs. But what kind of

qualitative data does this process generate and how can it best be analysed – particularly given my opening caveat that photographs are sometimes viewed from the mainstream as dubious sources of social science data? A systematic approach to photographic analysis has become necessary to demonstrate, as qualitative research becomes increasingly ‘systematized’ by institutional pressures (Cassell & Symon, 2012, pp. 4–5). These include the imperative to publish in high ranking journals that insist on codified, analytically precise expositions of findings, and ethics review boards that grant approval to undertake research (Cassell & Symon, 2012). This in turn puts pressure on researchers to undertake and justify the validity of their work in ways that mimic more positivist, quantitative, studies – for example, clear, unambiguous steps that explain exactly how the researcher went from data to findings – even if the reality of qualitative interpretation is – and should be – a much more intuitive and messy process. Yet analytical techniques for participant-generated images are not very well developed, and have certainly not kept pace with conceptual and practical methodological commentary on participatory photography (Prosser & Loxley, 2008). With the above in mind, this section highlights some key problems in analysing participatory photographic data and outlines some approaches undertaken by researchers using photo-elicitation methods.

Placing Participants/ Photographers’ Meanings at the Heart of Data Analysis

Catalani and Minkler (2010) reviewed 37 photo-voice articles on health and social care topics and found ‘very little’ discussion of data analysis. They identify this as a shortcoming, noting ‘essential information about how researchers went from photographs to findings is rarely mentioned’ (Catalani & Minkler, 2010, p. 447). Hergenrather et al.’s

(2009) review article of 31 photo-voice studies in the discipline of ‘community studies’ also found no mention of data analysis beyond the degree of researcher-researched interaction. Shortt and Warren (2018) contend that this is mostly likely because participatory approaches – and especially photo-voice – have a clear ethical commitment to building upon the meanings photographers attribute to their photographs. What the participant says the photograph is ‘of’ and what it means to them is at the heart of the research design, and this continues when the photos are viewed and/or discussed during subsequent research encounters (e.g. interviews or focus groups, for example). Meyer et al.’s (2013, p. 513) description of photo-elicitation techniques being valuable uses of the visual due to their ‘dialogical’ character, admirably sums up their analysis. Returning to the idea that photography is performative, viewing and discussing photographs with participants are ‘event[s] of seeing’ (Belova, 2006, p. 47) mingling the subjectivities of the photographer(s) and researcher(s), layered over and through the photograph itself (see also Croghan et al., 2008). I have already mentioned some examples of how data is co-created in this manner (e.g. Figure 15.1 ‘behind the plants’).

Analysing Photo-Interview Data: A Dialogic Approach

Photo-interviews are usually audio-recorded and then transcribed to produce lengthy texts of the dialogue, which is coded, themed or analysed as a narrative according to analytical protocols for more traditional qualitative interviews (e.g., see Chapters 4 and 13, this volume.) If interviews are not possible, for geographical or other logistical reasons, participants could be asked to provide a statement or short written commentary about their images instead. Bramming et al.’s (2012, p. 59) ‘snaplog’ method involved participants sending their ‘snap[shot]s’ of ‘a good

day at work' to the research team with a few words about why they made the photograph and how it related to the research theme (the 'log' part). In both photo-interviews and snappings, photographs could take digital or print form, but other variations on the use of photographs to generate dialogue in interviews require them to be printed as hard copies.

Because the visual element of a photograph is so salient to its definition, we tend to forget that when printed, photographs are also material objects to be handled, passed around and capable of being arranged in different ways which add to our understandings of the topic being studied (see Edwards & Hart, 2004). The decision to print photographs or view them on screen is therefore not inconsequential, as I noted earlier. For example, in the case of Shortt's study, she developed the concept of 'identityscape' (Shortt, 2012) to describe the ways her participants arranged their photographs as montages that represented different facets of themselves. The term 'identityscape' was inspired by David Hockney's photo-collages and the word 'landscape' – as a backdrop against which we make sense of salient environmental features. The 'identityscape' effectively and visually mapped the multiple selves of Shortt's (2012) participants by showing the fragmented ways identity at work is expressed, yet also understood as a whole. Another technique exploiting the material qualities of photographs was used by Betts (2015) in her study of meaningful workplace objects. She extended Kelly's psychological method of 'repertory grids' into the visual domain by randomly placing three photographs in front of her participants and asking them 'how are any two of these alike, and one different?' This method aims to excavate the underlying constructs people use to structure their experiences by forcing them to make choices between disparate artefacts. In doing so, the 'schema' they draw upon in making sense of the world become clearer to see. In Betts' (2015) case, this was a stark contrast between a 'work self' and a 'non-work self' that underpinned

their values and which didn't come through as clearly during the more discursive dialogue about their photographs.

Avoiding Analytical Blindness: Returning to the Visual In Analysis

Photographs are valuable vehicles through which to generate talk and allow the participant greater input into the research process. However, an emphasis on dialogue in the analysis of photo-elicitation data leads to a tendency to assume that in the end, all that matters is the text (Shortt & Warren, 2018) leading to the ironic outcome that photo-elicitation studies can be strangely 'blind' to their visual data (Drew & Guillemin, 2014). While some study photographs are usually included in research outputs for their power to disseminate, these are generally used to illustrate themes derived from analysis of the photo-interview texts (e.g. Kramer et al.'s, 2010 obesity research discussed earlier). But what do we miss when we discount the *visual* features of the photograph in *analysis* – when coding and theming as well as writing up research findings? As already outlined, the performative character of photography means photographers' subjectivities are foregrounded through the conscious and unconscious choices they make when executing the task. Their aesthetic, embodied, spatial and other material 'knowledges' leave traces in the composition, content and framing of the photographs research participants make, so mining this 'visual mode of meaning' (Meyer et al., 2013, p. 491), in addition to the discursive meanings attributed during photo-interviews, offers a lot of potential to qualitative researchers (c.f., ch. 8, this volume). Shortt (2015) found this to be the case in her study of hairdressers' spatialized identities outlined above. By returning to the details of the photographs her participants made (once the text generated during photo-interviews had been interpreted into themes) and importantly taking a sample-wide view of these

images, she was able to recognize interesting *visual* patterns in her data. In particular, it was apparent that her participants positioned themselves in liminal spaces within their workplaces when making photographs to convey elements of their selfhood at work (e.g. standing in or on the entrances to cupboards, toilets, doorsteps, stairways, etc.). As this was regardless of the type of hair salon they worked within and the kind of role they performed at work, it led her to conclude that these ‘in between’ spaces were important sources of identity construction for workers who lack personal space (such as an office, desk or other ‘territory’) – a finding which made a major contribution to literature on materiality and organization, and which was awarded ‘Best Paper’ prize in an internationally leading organization studies journal¹² (Shortt, 2015).

Shortt and Warren (2018) term this approach ‘grounded visual pattern analysis’ and it combines the strength of dialogic analyses of the text generated through photo-interviews, with a more ‘archaeological’ (Meyer et al., 2013) investigation of what the *visual content* conveys when photographs are grouped together in themes. In Shortt’s study, the significance of the visuals was inferred using a holistic, impressionistic method in which the researcher pays attention to the striking patterns and more subtle nuances of the images when laid out in thematic sets (Collier, 2001). Shortt and Warren (2018) break this down further into ‘symbolic’ and ‘compositional viewing’ to direct the researcher’s attention to both the manifest content of the photographs (e.g. what they are ‘of’) and their stylistic features (framing, camera angle, focus, any filters and effects, for example). If a more detailed, structural analysis of images is required, protocols are well established in communication and media studies and include semiotic and content analysis, for example, both of which can be applied to qualitative data (see Rose (2013) for excellent introductions to these). In organizational research, these methods have been used for

analysing strategic organizational images such as advertisements, annual reports, websites, etc. and so helpful advice can be found in published articles. For good examples from accounting, marketing and HRM, respectively, see Davison, 2009; Garland et al., 2013 and Swan, 2010. However, in using these methods with participatory photo-elicitation data it is important that the participants’ meanings are not lost in favour of the researcher’s analysis and/or the contextual meanings surrounding the generation of the photographs (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001, p. 568). This is just one of the ethical issues that arise when incorporating a camera into qualitative research designs – how much say do the photographers, or indeed subjects of photographs, have over how their images are categorized, captioned and used? I now turn to consider ethical issues in photo-voice methods in more depth.

POINT AND SHOOT? ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Despite all the opportunities I have discussed so far, we cannot escape the challenges that the immediate, powerful and evidential nature of photography also brings – particularly with regard to its instantaneous identification of people, places and of course organizations. Coupled with the conservatism and power of ‘new ethical bureaucracies’ (Boden et al., 2009, p. 728) that grant project approval in research institutions (such as universities, funding councils and public sector bodies, e.g. the NHS in the UK), it would be tempting to think it too problematic to even ask to use photography. When I run researcher development workshops on the use of photography, it is questions of ethics that are most commonly raised, but these revolve around well-established concerns: consent, anonymity, safety, and respect for the individual – to name the most common ones. However, the approach I take in this

section is that we must not overlay the idea that photographic methods are intrinsically more ethically problematic than any other qualitative method.

The Challenges of Ethical Bureaucracy

Wiles et al. (2012) conducted empirical research to explore current practice with visual researchers working in UK universities and found strategies of ‘creative compliance’ were used to obtain ethics committee approval (Power, cited in Wiles et al., 2012, p. 4.2). In their dealings with research ethics committees, Wiles et al.’s (2012) participants either reported (1) normalizing the issues raised by visual methods as being no different to any other qualitative method; (2) making a case for the peculiarities of visual methodologies arguing they should be treated differently from the assessment of other qualitative methods; and/or (3) presenting a version of the research process that bore only loose resemblance to how the research was actually carried out in reality in order to secure ethics committee approval. These findings suggest that despite increasing institutional control, visual researchers *are* finding effective ways to retain professional judgement over how to design ethically sensitive field studies that treat participants with respect and care and ensure ethical regulations do not scupper the progression of visual research. Vince and Warren (2012) noted that practice-based protocols for the ethical conduct of photography-based management and organizational research had yet to emerge, echoing concerns raised by Wiles et al. (2008) about visual ethics in the social sciences more generally. Around the same time, the International Visual Sociology Association (IVSA) drew up a code of ethical conduct for researchers (Papademas & IVSA, 2009) and this is an invaluable guide when preparing grant applications or designing research, particularly where a committee

or review board will pass judgement on the ethical aspects of a project. The following sections focus in more detail on the two major issues researchers might need to consider in more depth when using photography as opposed to more traditional interview or observation based methods.

Consent, Safety and Harm

As in all social research, subjects should be asked whether they agree to being involved in the project. In that regard, photographic research is no different from more traditional qualitative research with participants signing a consent form.¹³ In photographic research, this equates to two elements: (1) consent of the participant undertaking the photography task (and particularly obtaining their permission for the researcher to use their photographs in publications) and (2) consent of people likely to be, or actually photographed – whether they mind being photographed, with the option of having their identities concealed if they wish. However, where does the need to gain consent begin and end? In the first instance, consent is fairly clear-cut, but things are more complex in the second scenario. Is it enough to just ask the study participant? How about people who might inadvertently be captured in photographs without their knowledge? How could they be consulted as to their willingness to be involved? With the above in mind, the *in-Visio* network referred to earlier in the chapter has assembled multidisciplinary links, papers and video case-studies on the ethics of visual research – and particularly photography. This resource is intended as an inspirational collection of advice and sensible debate in order to overcome the common perception that the issues involved are insurmountable, and is an excellent source of authority to which organizational researchers can make reference when preparing their applications for funding or institutional ethical committee approval for their visual research projects. These include

examples of ‘disclaimers’, text for writing statements to allow participants to ‘opt out’ of certain research activities, media release forms and guidelines for responsible photography.

Respect for the Individual

Given that most photographic research is now digital in nature (even if print based, the images need to be scanned to be stored on computers or used in publications), it is important to consider data security, especially when using cloud storage or file sharing systems such as Dropbox or Google Drive. Project-specific advice can be sought from the UK Data Archive (www.data-archive.ac.uk/) but there are some generic security precautions that apply to all projects, such as password protecting files and using an encrypted file transfer service where available. The rest of this section deals with what Langmann and Pick (2014) refer to as the balance to be struck between the dignity of the research subject and the institutional demand for de facto ethical practices in every case, such as requesting consent or ensuring anonymity. They usefully distinguish between ‘dignity-in-context’, ‘dignity-in-process’ and ‘dignity-in-outcome’ to delineate the differing issues that might arise at the time of photographing compared with later viewing (*ibid.*, p. 710). Dignity-in-context stresses a ‘cultural and relativistic’ sensitivity to involving participants in how, when and where they will be photographed (or asked to make photographs) and dignity-in-process reminds us that ethical issues should be ongoing conversations (*ibid.*, p. 713). Scarles’ (2013) investigation of the ethics of tourist photography is also a useful resource in highlighting the power dynamics and explicit negotiation that photographers and subjects enter into, set against more covert photographic practices. Dignity-in-outcome (Langmann & Pick, 2014, p. 712) refers to the extent to which research processes impact

upon participants after the research has ended (either positively or negatively), e.g. the capacity for photo-voice type projects to bring about social change as critiqued by Wang and Redwood-Jones (2001), and considering how publishing an image may impact on its photographer and/or subject’s life and relationships. Given the ease with which digital images can be manipulated through blurring, cropping or covering identifying features within a photograph, it is perhaps tempting to think these should be used in all cases. However, Allen’s (2015) thought provoking article problematizes this by arguing that removing the heads and faces of photographic subjects can be dehumanizing, reduces the agency and/or voice of the photographer and their subject, and for certain research agendas can reduce the utility of the data since facial expressions and visual identities are part of the data analysis. However, she concludes by reiterating the need for an ethics-in-situ and accepts that impoverished photographs in research are better than no photographs at all.

CONCLUSION

In sum, the state of the ‘visual research’ field has changed greatly over the past ten years (Davison et al., 2012) leading to a growing corpus of methodological critique for contemporary organizational researchers to draw upon. This chapter has given an overview of the major fault lines in debates around the use of participative ‘dialogic’ (Meyer et al., 2013, p. 513) photography in qualitative organizational research and slowly but surely more empirical studies using photographic methods are being published with increasingly analytical reflection and exciting social and technological vistas opening up for future research (Favero, 2014). The early twenty-first century saw a revolution in the role of photography in social life – particularly among younger generations – from

documenting events, to using photographs in everyday communication, particularly ‘selfies’ (Iqani & Schroeder, 2016; Richter & Schadler, 2009; Uimonen, 2013). Organizations are not immune from such developments; they are made up of the people who are embracing these technologies and new visual cultures (Rettberg, 2014), and so need to become more visually astute in their practices in order to appeal to markets, clients and target audiences who increasingly expect to be engaged with in this way. Furthermore, it is organizations and their actions that fuel and enable the circulation of images in a myriad of forms, e.g. it is now *de rigueur* for firms to have Facebook pages, Twitter accounts and YouTube channels in addition to the ‘old-fashioned’ website (Leonard, 2014), which itself has changed dramatically over the past ten years (Elliot & Robinson, 2014). Perhaps more significantly is the manner in which organizations’ stakeholders expect to be able to interact with the firm, sharing images and videos of themselves using – and even unboxing! – products on social media (Buist, 2014) helping to co-create the value of brands and engage in viral marketing in ways increasingly uncontrolled by the firm (Price et al., 2008; Rokka and Canniford 2016). Of course, this interaction is not always positive for the company or its brand and the management and reconciliation of visual social media with the firm’s desired brand identity is a significant issue (Bell & McArthur, 2014). All these developments suggest a vibrant and fascinating future for qualitative organizational researchers wishing to incorporate photography into their research practice, either as an object of study in itself or as a method to excavate meaning in any research project. Technology changes fast and this is not a reason to shy away from innovative methods, but instead to find ways of incorporating new media into our existing practices in a manner that helps us generate richer, more useful and perhaps different data than we might be able to with our existing arsenal of qualitative methods.

Notes

- 1 I am indebted to the anonymous reviewer and Prof. Gina Grandy for their extremely helpful comments on earlier drafts of this chapter. I would also like to thank the hundreds of students and researchers who have taken part in my workshops over the years whose questions and experiences have continually shaped my thinking into what you are about to read here.
- 2 Throughout the chapter I use the terms photographs and images to refer to different aspects of the visual research process. Where I use ‘photograph’ it is to refer to a specific attribute of photography or to the photograph as object within the research process. I use the term ‘image’ where the discussion refers to visual qualities that are not medium-dependent. That is, where the important point is with the *visual character* of photographs rather than the fact they are photographs (and not drawings for instance).
- 3 Several excellent texts exist for the analysis of strategic images including Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, Rose’s (2013) *Visual Research Methodologies* and several contributions to the *Routledge Companion to Visual Organization* (Bell et al., 2014).
- 4 In order to better convey the constructed, subjective character of participatory photography, throughout the chapter I use the terms ‘make’ and ‘making’ instead of the more usual verb ‘to take’ (Warren, 2002).
- 5 Publishing photographs as part of my article was not a problem for *Organization Studies*, for example (except they insisted on captions), and there are a number of articles in *Organization and Consumption, Markets and Culture* featuring photographs (e.g. Garland et al., 2013; O’Guinn, 2015) and special issues on the visual have recently been commissioned by *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal* (2009), *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management* (2012) and *Organizational Research Methods* (2016).
- 6 The *inVisio* website also has a useful guide to technical and practical issues for novice researchers <http://moodle.in-visio.org>.
- 7 To gain a feel for what’s possible in this regard, see Widder (2016) for a review of current ‘selfie apps’ that fine tune and alter images.
- 8 All names in this chapter are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the research participants.
- 9 Selected from my collection of images made during research on fun workplaces.
- 10 Langer (1957) was writing about the arts and in particular the performing arts but her arguments

remain plausible for photographs too given their similarities as performances.

- 11 This is also usually the case when I run research methods workshops on reflexive photography with all levels of student and researcher.
- 12 I mention this to show how receptive high ranking journals are becoming to visual research reports.
- 13 See www.moodle.in-visio.org for examples of consent forms and other supporting documents for ethical visual research practice.

REFERENCES

- Allen, L. (2015) 'Losing face? Photo-anonymisation and visual research Integrity', *Visual Studies*, 30(3), 295–308.
- Armstrong, D. (2004) *Organization in the Mind: Psychoanalysis, Group Relations and Organizational Consultancy*. London: Karnac.
- Barrett, T. (2006) *Criticizing Photographs: An introduction to Understanding Images*. McGraw Hill: New York.
- Barthes, R. (1982) *Camera Lucida*. London: Vintage.
- Bateson, G. & Mead, M. (1942) *Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis*. New York: New York Academy of the Sciences.
- Becker, H. (1974), 'Photography and sociology', *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication*, 1(1), 3–26.
- Bell, E. (2012) 'Ways of seeing death: A critical semiotic analysis of organizational memorialization', *Visual Studies*, 27(1), 4–17.
- Bell, E. & Davison, J. (2013) 'Visual management studies: Empirical and theoretical approaches', *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15(2), 167–84.
- Bell, E. & McArthur (2014) 'Visual authenticity and organizational sustainability', in E. Bell, S. Warren and J. Schroeder (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Visual Organization*. Routledge: London, pp. 365–378.
- Bell, E., Warren, S., & Schroeder, J. (2014) *The Routledge Companion to Visual Organization*. Routledge: London.
- Belova, O. (2006) 'The event of seeing: A phenomenological perspective on visual sense-making', *Culture and Organization*, 12(2), 93–107.
- Berger, J. (1972) *Ways of Seeing*. London: Penguin Books.
- Betts, J. (2015) Material objects, meaning and workplace identity. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Essex, UK.
- Boden, R., Epstein, D., & Latimer, J. (2009) 'Accounting for ethos or programmes for conduct? The brave new world of research ethics committees', *The Sociological Review*, 57(4): 727–49.
- Bramming, P., Gorm-Hansen, B., Bojesen, A., & Gylling Olesen, K. (2012) '(Im)perfect pictures: Snaplogs in performativity research', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 7(1), 54–71.
- Buchanan, D. (2001) 'The role of photography in organizational research: A reengineering case illustration', *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 10(2), 151–64.
- Buchanan, D. & Bryman, A. (2009) 'The organizational research context: properties and implications', in D. Buchanan and A. Bryman (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Research Methods*. London: Sage, pp. 1–18.
- Buist, E. (2014) 'Unboxing: The YouTube phenomenon that lets you see what you're getting', *The Guardian*, available at www.theguardian.com/technology/shortcuts/2014/jul/21/unboxing-youtube-phenomenon-videos-unpackaging-toys, last accessed 3 March 2016.
- Burgin, V. (1986) *The End of Art Theory: Criticism and Postmodernism*. London: Macmillan.
- Cassell, C. & Symon, G. (2012) 'Introduction: The context of qualitative organizational research', in G. Symon and C. Cassell (eds.) *Qualitative Organizational Research: Core Methods and Current Challenges*. London: Sage.
- Catalani, C. & Minkler, M. (2010) 'Photovoice: A review of the literature in health and public health', *Health Education Behavior*, 37(3), 424–51.
- Collier, M. (2001) 'Approaches to analysis in visual anthropology', in T. van Leeuwen and C. Jewitt (eds.) *Handbook of Visual Analysis*. London: Sage, pp. 35–60.
- Collier, J. & Collier, M. (1986) *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method*. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, NM.
- Coverley, M. (2010) *Psychogeography*. Harpenden: Oldcastle Books.

- Crang, M. (1997) 'Picturing practices: Research through the tourist gaze' *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol 21(3), 359–73.
- Croghan, R., Griffin, C., Hunter, J., & Phoenix, A. (2008) 'Young people's constructions of self: Notes on the use and analysis of the photo-elicitation methods', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11(4), 345–56.
- Davison, J. (2009) 'Icon, iconography, iconology: Visual branding, banking and the case of the bowler hat', *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal*, 22(6), 883–906.
- Davison, J., McLean, C., & Warren, S. (2012) 'Exploring the visual in organizations and management', special issue editorial, *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 7(1), 5–15.
- Davison, J. & Warren, S. (2009) 'Imag[in]ing accounting and accountability', *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 22(6), 845–57.
- Davison, J. & Warren, S. (2017) 'Visual methodologies for accounting and accountability', in Z. Hoque, L.D. Parker, M. Covalesski and K. Haynes (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Qualitative Accounting Research Methods*, in print.
- De Cock, C. & Sharp, R.J. (2007) 'Process theory and research: Exploring the dialectic tension', *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 23(3), 233–50.
- Drew, S. & Guillemin, M. (2014) 'From photographs to findings: visual meaning-making and interpretive engagement in the analysis of participant-generated images', *Visual Studies*, 29, 54–67.
- Edwards, E. & Hart, J. (2004) *Photographs, Objects, Histories: On the Materiality of Images*. London: Psychology Press.
- Elliott, C. & Robinson, S. (2014) 'Towards an understanding of corporate web identity', in E. Bell, S. Warren and J. Schroeder (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Visual Organization*. London: Routledge, pp. 273–88.
- Favero, P. (2014) 'Learning to look beyond the frame: Reflections on the changing meanings of images in the age of digital media practices', *Visual Studies*, 29(2), 166–79.
- Frith, H. & Harcourt, D. (2007) 'Using photographs to capture women's experiences of chemotherapy: Reflecting on the method', *Qualitative Health Research*, 17(10), 1340–50.
- Gabriel, Y. (1999) *Organizations in Depth: The Psychoanalysis of Organizations*. London: Sage.
- Gallo, M. (2002) 'Picture this: Immigrant workers use photography for communication and change', *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 14(2), 49–57.
- Garland, J., Huising, R., & Streuben, J. (2013) 'What if technology worked in harmony with nature? Imagining climate change through Prius advertisements', *Organization*, 20(5), 679–704.
- Goldstein, B. (2007) 'All photos lie: Images as data', in G. Stanczak (ed.) *Visual Research Methods: Image, Society and Representation*. London: Sage, pp. 61–81.
- Halford, S. (2004) 'Towards a sociology of organizational space', *Sociological Research Online* 9(1), available at www.socresonline.org.uk/9/1/halford.html
- Hancock, P. (2005) 'Uncovering the semiotic in organizational aesthetics', *Organization*, 12(1), 29–50.
- Harper, D. (1986) 'Meaning and work: A study in photo-elicitation', *Current Sociology*, 34(3), 24–46.
- Harper, D. (1998) 'An argument for visual sociology', in J. Prosser (ed.) *Image-based Research: A Sourcebook for Qualitative Researchers*. London: Falmer Press, pp. 24–41.
- Hedges, N. & Beynon, H. (1982) *Born to Work: Images of Factory Life*. London: Pluto.
- Helms-Mills, J. (2005) 'Organizational change and representations of women in a North American utility company', *Gender, Work and Organization*, 12(3), 242–69.
- Hergenrather, K.C., Rhodes, S.D., Cowen, C.A., Bardhoshi, G., & Pula, S. (2009) 'Photovoice as community-based participatory research: A qualitative review', *American Journal of Health Behaviour*, 33(6), 686–98.
- Hölm, G. (2008) 'Photography as a performance', *FQS: Forum Qualitative Social Research*, 9(2), Art. 38.
- Hurworth, R. (2003) 'Photo-interviewing for research', *Social Research Update*, 40, University of Surrey.
- Iqani, M. & Schroeder, J. (2016) '#selfie: Digital self-portraits as commodity form and

- consumption practice', *Consumption, Markets, Culture*, 19(5), 405–15.
- Kramer, L., Schwartz, P., Cheadle, A., Borton, J.E., Wright, M., Chase, C., & Lindley, C. (2010) 'Promoting policy and environmental change using photovoice in the Kaiser Permanente community health initiative', *Health Promotion Practice*, 11(3), 332–9.
- Kress, G. & van Leeuwen, T. (2006) *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge.
- Langer, S.K. (1957) *Philosophy in a New Key*. Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press.
- Langmann, S. & Pick, D. (2014) 'Dignity and ethics in research photography', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 17(6), 709–21.
- Leonard, P. (2014) 'Social media and organizations', in E. Bell, S. Warren and J. Schroeder (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Visual Organization*. London: Routledge, pp. 322–34.
- Marcus, G. (1995) 'The modernist sensibility in recent ethnographic writing and the cinematic metaphor of montage', in L. Devereaux and R. Hillman (eds.) *Fields of Vision: Essays in Film Studies, Visual Anthropology and Photography*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, pp. 32–55.
- Matilal, S. & Höpfl, H. (2009) 'Accounting for the Bhopal disaster: Footnotes and photographs', *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 22(6), 953–72.
- Meyer, R.E., Höllerer, M.A., Jancsary, D., & van Leeuwen, T. (2013) 'The visual dimension in organizing, organization, and organization research: Core ideas, current developments, and promising avenues', *The Academy of Management Annals* 7(1), 489–555.
- Mitchell, W.J.T. (1994) *Picture Theory*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Mizen, P. (2005) 'A little "light work"? Children's images of their labour', *Visual Studies*, 20(2), 124–39.
- Mørgensen, M. (2012) The organization(s) of well-being and productivity: (Re)assembling work in the Danish post. PhD thesis, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark.
- Molotch, H. & McClain, N. (2008) 'Things at work: Informal social-material mechanisms for getting the job done', *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 8(1), 35–67.
- Neyland, D. (2008) *Organizational Ethnography*. London: Sage.
- O'Guinn, T. (2015) 'Review essay: Bricks and mortar – Offline shopping in online America', *Consumption, Markets, Culture*, 18(5), 468–73.
- Papademas, D. & The International Visual Sociology Association (2009) IVSA Code of Research Ethics and Guidelines, *Visual Studies*, 24(3), 250–7.
- Parker, L. (2009) 'Photo-elicitation: An ethno-historical accounting and management research prospect', *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 22(7), 1111–29.
- Parker, L. & Warren, S. (In Press) 'The presentation of the self and professional identity: countering the accountant stereotype', *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, paper presented to the *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Accounting Conference*, Cardiff, 11–13 July.
- Pink, S. (2009) *Doing Sensory Ethnography*. London: Sage.
- Pink, S. (2013) *Doing Visual Ethnography*, 3rd edition. London: Sage.
- Price, K., Gioia, D., & Corley, K. (2008) 'Reconciling scattered images: Managing disparate organizational expressions and impressions', *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 17(3), 173–85.
- Prosser, J. & Loxley, A. (2008) 'Introducing visual methods', *ESRC National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper*, available at <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/420/1/MethodsReviewPaperNCRM-010.pdf>, last accessed 14 December 2016.
- Puyou, F., Quattrone, P., McLean, C., & Thrift, N. (2012) *Imagining Organizations: Performative Imagery in Business and Beyond*. Abingdon, UK: Taylor & Francis.
- Rancière, J. (2007) *The Future of the Image*. London: Verso Books.
- Ray, J.L. & Smith, A.D. (2010) 'Worth a thousand words: Photographs as a novel methodological tool in strategic management', In D.D. Bergh and D.J. Ketchen (eds.) *Research Methodology in Strategy and Management: Vol. 6. Building Methodological Bridges*. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, pp. 289–326.
- Ray, J.L. & Smith, A.D. (2012) 'Using photographs to research organizations: Evidence,

- considerations, and application in a field study', *Organizational Research Methods*, 15(2), 288–315.
- Rettberg, J. (2014) *Seeing Ourselves Through Technology: How We Use Selfies, Blogs and Wearable Devices to See and Shape Ourselves*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Richter, R. & Schadler, C. (2009) 'See my virtual self: Dissemination as a characteristic of digital photography – The example of Flickr.com', *Visual Studies*, 24(2), 169–77.
- Rokka, J. & Canniford, R. (2016) 'Heterotopian sel es: how social media destabilizes brand assemblages'. *European Journal of Marketing*, 50(9/10), 1789–1813.
- Rose, G. (2013) *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*. London: Sage.
- Scarles, C. (2010) 'Where words fail, visuals ignite: Opportunities for visual auto-ethnography in tourism research', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 37(4), 905–26.
- Scarles C. (2013) 'The ethics of tourist photography: Tourists' experiences of photographing locals in Peru'. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 31(5), 897–917.
- Scott, C. (1999) *The Spoken Image: Photography and Language*. London: Reaktion Books.
- Shortt, H. (2010) The hair salon: Constructions of space and identity. PhD thesis, University of Bath, UK.
- Shortt, H. (2012) 'Identityscapes of a hair salon: Work identities and the value of visual methods', *Sociological Research Online*, 17(2), available at www.socresonline.org.uk/17/2/22.html
- Shortt, H. (2015) 'Liminality, space and the importance of "transitory dwelling places" at work', *Human Relations*, 68(4), 633–58.
- Shortt, H. & Warren, S. (2012) 'Fringe benefits: Valuing the visual in narratives of hairdressers' identities at work', *Visual Studies*, 27(1), 18–34.
- Shortt, H. & Warren, S. (2018) 'Grounded Visual Pattern Analysis: Photographs in organizational field studies' *Organizational Research Methods*, forthcoming.
- Sievers, B. (2007) 'Pictures from below the surface of the university: The social photomatrix as a method for understanding organizations in depth', in M. Reynolds and R. Vince (eds.) *Experiential Learning and Management Education*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, pp. 241–57.
- Slutskaya, N., Simpson, R., & Hughes, J. (2012) 'Lessons from photoelicitation: Encouraging working men to speak', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 7(1), 16–33.
- Sontag, S. (1979) *On Photography*. London: Penguin Books.
- Sørensen, B. (2014) 'The method of juxtaposition: Unfolding the visual turn in organization studies', in E. Bell, S. Warren and J. Schroeder (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Visual Organization*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge, pp. 46–63.
- Strangleman, T. (2012) 'Picturing work in an industrial landscape: Visualising labour, place and space', *Sociological Research Online*, 17(2) available at www.socresonline.org.uk/17/2/20.html
- Strati, A. (1999) *Organization and Aesthetics*. London: Sage.
- Swan, E. (2010) 'Commodity diversity: Smiling faces as a strategy of containment', *Organization*, 17(1), 77–100.
- Uimonen, P. (2013) 'Visual identity in Facebook', *Visual Studies*, 28(2), 122–35.
- Vince, R. & Warren, S. (2012) 'Qualitative, participatory visual methods', in C. Cassell and G. Symons (eds.) *The Practice of Qualitative Organizational Research: Core Methods and Current Challenges*, London: Sage, pp. 275–95.
- Wagner, J. (1979) *Images of Information*. London: Sage.
- Wagner, J. (2001) 'Does image-based field work have more to gain from extending or from rejecting scientific realism?', *Visual Studies*, 16(2), 7–21.
- Wang, C. & Burris, M.A. (1997) 'Photovoice: Concept, methodology and use for participatory needs assessment', *Health Education & Behavior*, 24(3), 369–87.
- Wang, C. & Redwood-Jones, Y. (2001) 'Photovoice ethics: Perspectives from Flint Photovoice', *Health Education & Behavior*, 28(5), 560–72.
- Warnes, S. (2015) Exploring the lived dimension of organisational space: An ethnographic study of an English Cathedral. PhD thesis, University of Essex, UK.
- Warren, S. (2002) 'Show me how it feels to work here: Using photography to research

- organizational aesthetics', *Ephemera*, 2(3), 224–45.
- Warren, S. (2005a) 'Photography and voice in critical qualitative management research', *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 18(6), 861–82.
- Warren, S. (2005b) Consuming work: An exploration of organizational aestheticization. PhD thesis, University of Portsmouth, UK.
- Warren, S. (2006) 'Hot-nesting: A visual exploration of the personalization of workspace in a hot-desking environment', in P. Case, S. Lilley and T. Owens (eds.) *The Speed of Organization*. Copenhagen, Denmark: CBS Press, pp. 119–46.
- Warren, S. (2008) 'Empirical challenges in organizational aesthetics research: Towards a sensual methodology', *Organization Studies*, 29(4), 559–80.
- Warren, S. (2009) 'Visual methods in organizational research', in A. Bryman and D. Buchanan (eds.) *Handbook of Organizational Research Methods*. London: Sage, pp. 566–82.
- Warren, S. (2012a) 'Psychoanalysis, collective viewing and the "social photo matrix" in organizational research', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 7(1), 86–104.
- Warren, S. (2012b) 'Having an eye for it: Aesthetics, ethnography and the senses', *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, 1(1), 107–18.
- Warren, S. (2016) 'Visual: Looking at organization', in R. Mir, H. Willmott and M. Greenwood (eds.) *Philosophy in Organization Studies: Life, Knowledge and Disruption*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge, pp. 584–91.
- Warren, S. & Parker, L. (2009) 'Bean counters or bright young things? Towards the visual study of identity construction among professional accountants', *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management*, 6(4), 205–23.
- Watts, S. (2014) Exploring the lived experience of stress amongst female police managers. PhD thesis, University of Essex, UK.
- Widder, B. (2016) 'Treat yo selfie with one of these 12 apps made to beautify your pics', *Digital Trends*, www.digitaltrends.com/photography/best-selfie-apps/ last accessed 23 November 2016.
- Wiles, R., Coffey, A., Robison, J. & Prosser, J. (2012) 'Ethical regulation and visual methods: Making visual research impossible or developing good practice?' *Sociological Research Online*, 17(1), available at www.socresonline.org.uk/17/1/8.html.
- Wiles, R., Prosser, J., Bagnoli, A., Clark, A., Davies, K., Holland, S., & Renold, E. (2008) 'Visual ethics: Ethical issues in visual research', ESRC National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper NCRM/011.

Drawing

Jenna Ward and Harriet Shortt

INTRODUCTION

Visual images are one of the most powerful, versatile and egalitarian forms of communication in both modern and historical society. Drawing was the first form of communication used by all known human cultures, predating written language by thousands of years. Yet, despite drawing being engrained in the foundations of our social, technological, cultural and language systems and therefore, an arguably innate human activity, it is uncommon, if not unusual, to see them used in organisational, business and social research. Methodological pluralism in organisational research has indeed expanded and deepened our understanding of the relationships, correlations and appreciations of a variety of business and management issues. And yet, with respect to the research of lived experiences of work and organisations that reflect participant's feelings, reflections and stories, interviews, of one variety or another, remain hegemonic. In 1982, Faulkner stated in relation to researching human subjects that the

'complexity of design and analysis has far exceeded complexity (and innovativeness) of data collection' (1982, p. 72).

There are, however, some exceptions to these general observations; more recently there has been something of a 'visual turn' in social and organisational research (Banks, 2001; Kara, 2015; Mitchell, 2011; Pink, 2007; Rose, 2012; Stanczak, 2007) with a number of scholars turning to a variety of visual methodologies to explore aspects of social life and lived experiences, often with difficult to reach or vulnerable groups. In this chapter, we briefly explore this 'visual turn' to consider the variety of ways in which these scholars are engaging with methods that involve something other than cognitive, verbal responses. Whilst there have been developments in the breadth of visual methods utilised there is a continued paucity of projects that make use of drawing as a method of research. Specifically, here we are referring to participant-produced drawings (Guillemin &

Drew, 2010; Kearney & Hyle, 2004; Kirkham et al., 2015; Vince, 1995).

Upon that basis, we turn the focus of our attention in the remainder of this chapter to exploring the disparate extant literature that has employed participant-produced drawings as a research method. In particular, we focus on the literature from healthcare, education and art therapy to trace the origins of this marginalised method of enquiry. By drawing together the literatures and methods being developed in a number of disciplinary silos, we present a range of processes and practices in relation to the use of participant-produced drawings before turning to a discussion of some of the observed benefits and challenges to these methods of research. On the basis of our critical review of the use of participant-produced drawings, we offer our thoughts on the likely future developments in their use in business and management research. Let us begin, then, with a turn to the visual.

THE 'VISUAL TURN'

Research that adopts constructionist approaches assumes perceptions of everyday life are multi-layered, complex and individual and is therefore concerned with appreciations of subjectivity. This understanding of the world often gives way to collaborative studies where research is conducted *with* those that are *part* of the investigation. Methods employed within these types of research project often include ethnographic approaches, action research or narrative methods. Importantly, the validity of these research designs lie in authenticity and fairness (Lincoln & Guba, 2003), plausibility and criticality (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993) and, as such, are frequently linked to studies involving difficult to reach or vulnerable groups, the less powerful members of society and organisations (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012, p. 53), communities and stakeholders.

Over recent years, studies in business and management have developed approaches so

that they too might include these participant voices and stories to present and represent those they work with. Bell and Davison (2013) outline this shift and document that the move away from more positivistic research methodologies was broadly through the 'linguistic turn', which brought a 'major shift in 20th century thought, seeing language as constituting meaning and reality' (2013, p. 169). Nevertheless, they further debate that this privileging of language and narrative has now 'gone too far' and what our field faces is the 'under-explored' opportunities that *visual* methodologies may provide in accessing the voices of the over-looked.

It is the 'visual turn' in social and organisational research that is growing to be an accepted and indeed vital way in which these participant voices and stories are raised and heard (Banks, 2001; Kara, 2015; Mitchell, 2011; Pink, 2007; Rose, 2012; Stanczak, 2007). Amongst advocates of the visual, Guillemin and Drew (2010) define these methodologies as those that both empower and enable, be it through the use of drawings or photographs, material objects or collage. These methods make space for inclusion. Of particular note, the visual turn in business and management research has recently seen a variety of management journals publish research with both photographic images and drawings included and publish a number of 'visual' special issues (see, for example, Stiles, 1998, 2011; Ward & Shortt, 2012; Warren, 2002, 2005, 2008). Investment has been made by the ESRC for a funded series of *'inVisio'* (International Network for Visual Studies in Organisations www.in-visio.org) workshops/ seminars (2008–9), as well as an RDI (Researcher Development Initiative, 2010–12) project to advance the use of visual methodologies in the field of business and management research and build a solid foundation from which existing and future researchers can build their work.

Visual methods in management research is certainly growing and gaining pace, but within this particular field we find that a

bias and a hierarchy of visual methods has emerged. In the visual studies that are evolving, it is often photographs and photography that appear to attract researchers. Perhaps this is due to the ease with which technology makes this method accessible or perhaps it is connected to the visual culture in which we are immersed, but whatever the reason some find this photographic dominance problematic. Emmison and Smith (2000, p. 2) argue that 'the major impediment to the development of a vibrant research tradition in visual research' has been the focus on photography whilst other visual methods such as collage, textiles and crafting, and drawing require equal attention. Indeed, participant-produced drawings in organisation studies are rare to find. Consequently, the method continues to require development in key areas such as ethics and analysis, which are vital in building acceptance, in terms of authority and standing in the methodological domain, and ergo a more widespread use of the method. We examine some of these challenges later in the chapter.

That said, in the broader landscape of qualitative methods, participant-produced drawings hold unique potential for the business and management researcher. Rich, deep discussions can be accessed by providing participants with opportunities to recount events without a reliance on words alone. Emotions and emotional narratives are accessed through drawings, and consequently this method often allows researchers to explore sensitive or difficult topics within their studies. In addition, drawings allow researchers to address a variety of power dynamics within the researcher/participant relationship, something that is not often or easily addressed in other research methods. We will explore these benefits later in the chapter but first, in order to understand how we might encompass participant-produced drawing more readily in our repertoire of constructivist and visual inquiries, we need to turn to alternative disciplines. We begin this process with a focus on drawing's legacy in art therapy.

DRAWING

In our experience, the moment you mention drawing in the context of research you get one of three reactions: 'I can't draw!', 'I haven't done this since I was at school!' or 'What are you going to make of my deepest, darkest thoughts?' Despite these comments being light-hearted jibes, they represent the very important and often over-looked legacy of art therapy's experimental use of drawings as a method of psychological and emotional analysis and treatment. With this in mind, we felt it important to briefly review the history of drawing in the context of the discipline of art therapy before moving on to explore the disparate extant literature on drawing as a 'research method' per se.

Art therapy is a relatively new discipline. It emerged during the Second World War, when artist Adrian Hill, began to use his art to alleviate the boredom of the institutional regime. Consequently, other patients began to draw and paint their war experiences. The horrifying scenes of human suffering, violence and destruction created by these war veterans became vehicles for dialogue about their experiences, pains and fears (Waller, 1984). Hill (1945, 1951) went on to campaign on the importance of art in therapeutic settings. In 1946, Netherne Mental Hospital in the UK employed Edward Adamson as the first art therapist; however, it was not until 1980 that professional training standards were established. Art therapy is now defined as 'the use of art and other visual media in a therapeutic or treatment setting' (Dalley, 1984, pp. xii–xiii).

Given its comparative infancy as a therapeutic practice, art therapy has become increasingly popular, particularly with hard to reach groups (Laing, 1984; Riley, 1999); sensitive topics (Malchiodi, 1999) and with those who are less verbally literate, e.g. children (Diem-Wille, 2001), disabled (Stott & Males, 1984) and the geriatric (Miller, 1984). According to Fuller (1984, p. ix) 'the theoretical assumptions underlying art therapy have sometimes seemed vague and ill-defined',

which has led to a wide-ranging set of practices being developed on a global scale. Despite such a plurality of practice, there is no dispute that in one way or another art therapy has its theoretical origins in Freudian thinking, particularly Freud's distinction between primary and secondary processes, i.e. that art is a form of non-verbal communication (Freud, 1973). This has led to the use of art in psychologically therapeutic settings and processes to be used as a diagnostic tool, in that art produced or interpreted by patients give psychoanalysts a pictorial representation of their unconscious emotions and state of mind. Psychoanalytical approaches, including clinical psychology, to drawing and art, are underpinned by the belief that they facilitate access to a deeper, more emotional side of an individual's thoughts and actions (Diem-Wille, 2001). Those who work from this perspective see the patient-produced images as material for objective interpretation and analysis by Freudian and Jungian specialists (Reitman, 1950). In a comprehensive review of projective techniques (e.g. Rorschach Inkblot Test, Thematic Apperception Test and human figure drawings (Adler, 1970)) used in clinical and forensic settings, Lilienfeld et al. (2000, p. 27) are at pains to point out 'a curious discrepancy between research and practice' in that these techniques lack empirical support in relation to validity, reliability and utility, but are consistently popular in clinical practice. Such controversies surrounding these psychoanalytic projective techniques no doubt contributed to a theoretical and practice-driven split in the way art therapy was being thought about and practised in the UK and US in the late 1980s.

Riley's (1999) and Dalley's (1984) seminal texts demarcate classical art therapy (discussed above) which is a more common approach in practice in the US, and post-modern approaches that are being developed and practised particularly in the UK. Post-modern approaches to art therapy are underpinned by a social constructionist epistemology. Here then, art continues to be seen

as a 'potent way ... to communicate conflicting emotions and confusing questions of identity' (Malchiodi, 1999, p. 11). However, the emphasis is placed on the artistic process as a method of tapping into 'natural creative potentials to problem solve, to restore and repair the self, and to forge a meaningful therapeutic connection' (ibid.) to the therapist through the medium of the images via a process of transference (Freud, 1951). Importantly, the distinction lies in the way the images are perceived and analysed. Classical, psychoanalytic approaches to art therapy see drawings as a method of diagnosis through the objective analysis or pathology of the images produced by the patients. Post-modern, socially constructed, appreciations of art therapy view the production of the images as therapeutic to the patients whilst simultaneously working as an additional lens through which the therapist can 'get to know' the emotional and psychological sense-making processes of the patient. Sir Thomas Burton's articulation is neat in this regard:

It is not the therapists who tell the patient what to draw, or what has been drawn, for they are not interpreters of dreams, like Moses, but rather mouthpieces for the patient, leaving it to the patient to describe what he or she feels or has expressed. (Burton, 2005, p. xxi)

It is perhaps unsurprising given drawing is the foundation of art therapy, in one form or another, that its development into a research method has been seemingly most popular in health (Cross et al., 2006; Guillemin, 2004; Guillemin & Drew, 2010; Kirkham et al., 2015; Morgan et al., 2009) and education contexts (Kearney & Hyle, 2004; Muñoz et al., 2011; Ward & Shortt, 2012). Although 'drawing' as a research method has been undoubtedly most popular in health and education research, it remains a secondary or supportive research method. Even the strongest advocates of the method argue that it is 'best used in conjunction with other research methods' (Guillemin, 2004, p. 287). Reading across studies, much of this insecurity stems from issues of analysis and our continued

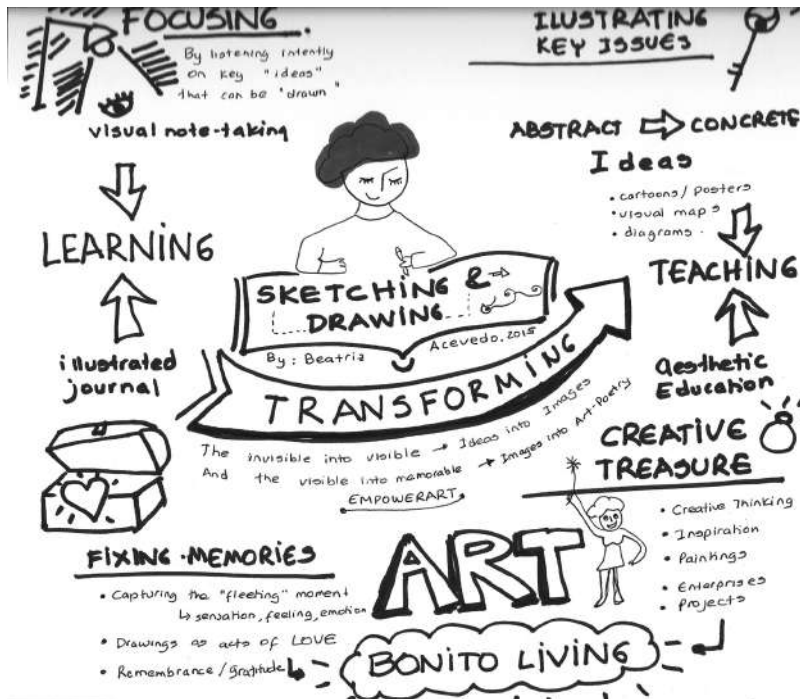


Figure 16.1 Drawing to record experiences

‘reliance on words for analyses of visual research methodologies’ (ibid.). We will return to issues of analysis later in the chapter; however, before we do it is also important to reiterate that drawing as a research method is very much in its infancy, in that there has been limited use of it being adopted across disciplines, not least in business and management research. Interestingly, Guillemin (2004, p. 274) makes a poignant observation regarding the legacy drawing and the arts have in therapeutic contexts. Namely, she argues by using drawings to diagnose and treat those who are ill, disabled or unable to, or proficiently, communicate verbally, they have taken on a negative association with those outside of the health and psychology disciplines. Essentially, this argument implies that the therapeutic potential of drawings is perceived negatively, or carries a stigma (Goffman, 1963), in so-called ‘healthy contexts’. Another significant drawback to the propagation of drawing as a research method

has been the diversity of approaches to the actual processes and methods of analysis used. It is to these issues that we now turn.

DRAWINGS IN BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

Although the use of drawings in business and management research is relatively rare, where they have been used we can see a variety of useful approaches that have been developed by organisational researchers for a number of reasons. For example, drawings can be produced by researchers themselves, within the field, in order to record personal experiences or as an aide memoire. Acevedo (2015) frequently uses sketch pads, notebooks and felt-tip pens to visually record and represent personal interpretations of conference papers, thoughts and ideas during fieldwork, and personal reflections on her work (Figure 16.1). Much the

same as Chaplin's work with photographs (2004), drawings used in this way can help to develop a 'visual diary' that usefully records the researcher experience.

Other researchers, whilst embracing a more realist ontology, might draw in order to depict and record organisational or social events and activities. For example, during Shortt's (2010) doctoral fieldwork that explored the spaces used by hairdressers in hair salons around the UK, she often recorded spatial maps and the movements and spatial practices of those who worked there (Figure 16.2). In a similar vein, Heath and Cleaver (2004) explore the use of space within shared household life. During their discussion of the visual methodologies used in the research, they include sketches of the living spaces and the context, content and layout of the houses they visited.

In recent work, drawings have also been used by researchers to overcome issues surrounding copyright and the challenges that often face visual researchers with regards to the reproduction of images. For example, in Rippin et al.'s work (forthcoming) on dress and the female professional, the authors use a visual social semiotic approach (van Leeuwen, 2005) to analyse the 1980s publication *Working Woman* magazine. As they note, 'permissions issues that arise from reproducing original media images, especially since tracing copyright holders for a thirty-year out-of-print magazine, proved problematic', thus, one of the author's 'side-stepped' this issue by *drawing* a series of sketches 'based on specific images from the magazines' (Figure 16.3).

Importantly however, Rippin et al. also identify that producing drawings in such a way allows the researcher to illustrate key aspects of an image and accentuate the parts that are felt to be most significant. This 'hand-drawn' approach to analysis and sense-making, they suggest, can be 'used as a "working-through" of possible forms and associated meanings by the researcher themselves' (forthcoming).

Thus far, from the examples above, we can see that drawings can be a useful

methodological approach for the researcher, yet in all these examples the drawings are either produced by the researcher themselves or already exist. What, then, of drawings produced by participants *Participant-produced* drawings are those images produced (often hand-drawn) by those researchers are working *with*. Participants are asked by the researcher to draw, typically using pens, pencils, crayons and paper, an image that relates to the topic in question. This participatory method, broadly asks those the researcher is working with to capture and project their experiences, feelings, emotions and thoughts onto paper in an attempt to explore and make sense of the image. For example, Guillemin (2004) asks women to draw their experience of heart disease and to 'draw how they visualized their condition' (p. 276), Cross et al. (2006) ask participants to draw their experiences of spinal injury. More specifically, in management research, Ward and Shortt (2012) explore the learning experiences of students in a UK business school, where amongst other findings the drawing method revealed a clear differentiation in the way students perceived their learning in tutorials and lectures (Figure 16.4).

PARTICIPANT-LED DRAWING: PRACTICES AND PROCESSES

Despite the relative paucity of studies across disciplines that have sought to employ 'participant-produced' or 'elicited' drawing as a research method, its disparate emergence has meant consistent and strategic approaches to the methodological procedure is often lacking. This is, however, paradoxical given most published pieces using these method predominantly describe, in quite some detail, the approach taken. Reading across the disciplines, it becomes apparent that there are three main differentiations in the way participant-produced drawing methods are employed; namely context, process

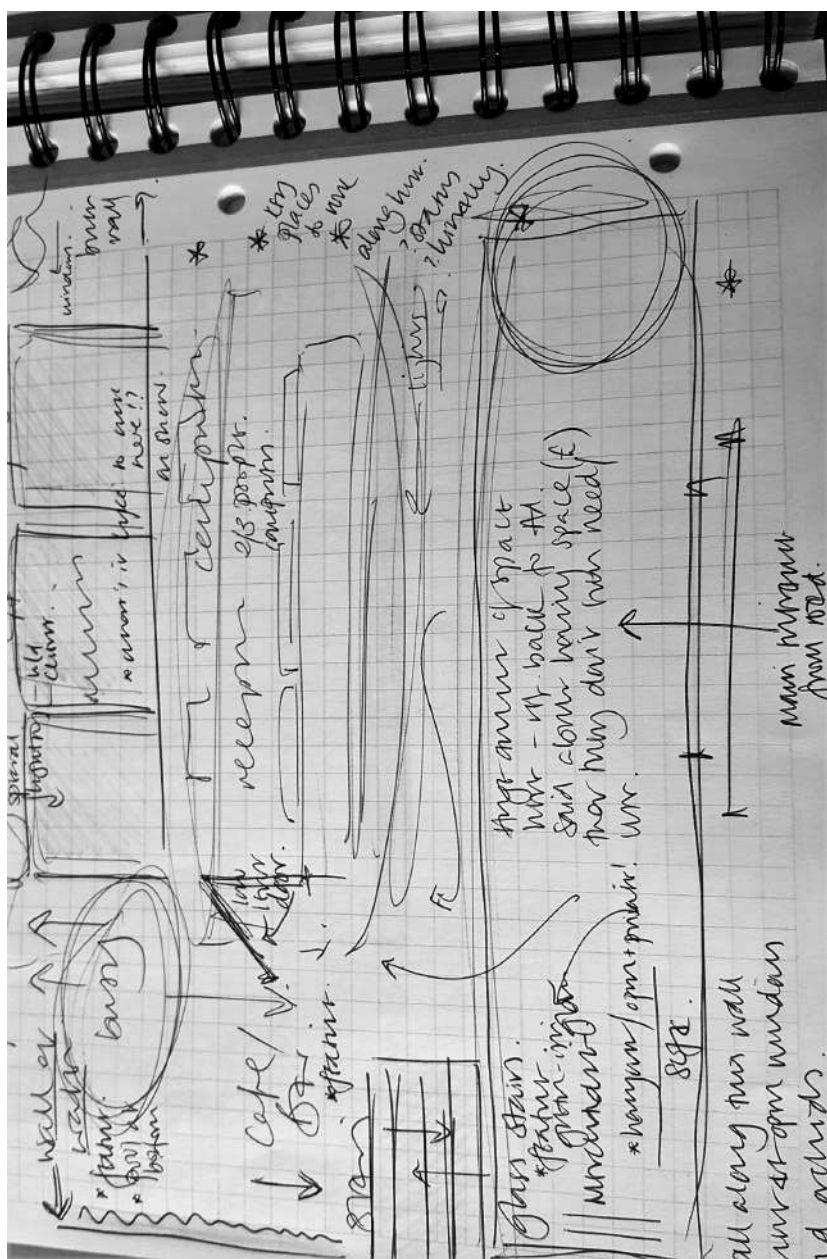


Figure 16.2 Recording Spatial Maps and Movements

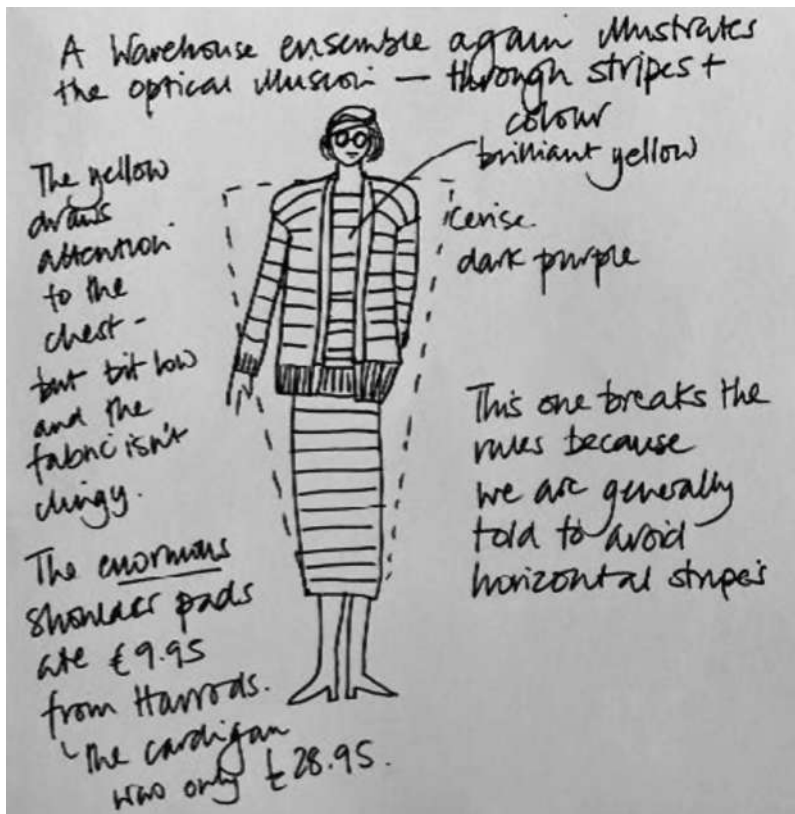


Figure 16.3 Sketching existing images

and analysis. In this section we briefly review, and give examples of, the variety of ways in which these context, process and analyses can differ in the implementation of drawing research methods.

Context

As previously mentioned, participant-produced drawings are rarely, if ever, used as the primary method of data collection in a research project. Instead, they are used as either an ice-breaker activity or as part of a broader, qualitative approach. There are three main research methods to which drawings have played a supporting role; individual interviews (Guillemin, 2004; Kearney & Hyle, 2004; Kirkham et al., 2015; Meyer, 1991; Morgan et al., 2009; Nossiter & Biberman,

1990), focus groups (Vince, 1995; Vince & Broussine, 1996; Ward & Shortt, 2012) and reflective logs (Weber & Mitchell, 1995).

Asking participants to draw during an individual interview is the most common way in which drawings have been used as a research method. However, even here there are differences in technique – some researchers prefer to ask participants to draw at the beginning of the interview, whilst others prefer it as an activity to bring the interview to a close (Guillemin, 2004) arguing that by such a point the researcher will have built up a good rapport with the interviewee thereby reducing the anxiety, awkwardness or shock that might arise as a consequence of being asked to draw. Whichever approach is adopted, the use of drawing in these contexts has been said to elicit deep feelings, personal narratives,

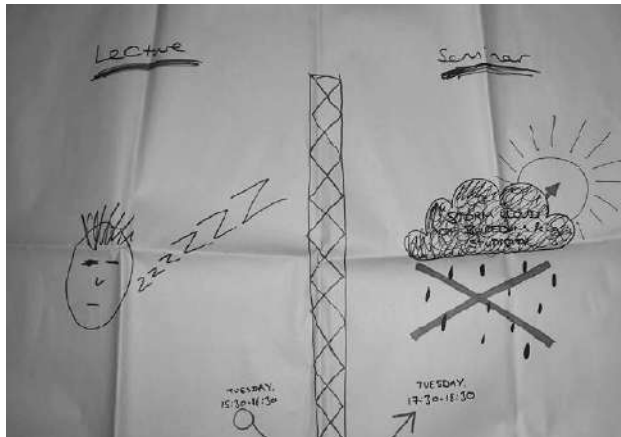


Figure 16.4 Participant-Produced Drawings (Ward & Shortt, 2013b)

reflection and even distance (Betensky, 1995; Morgan et al., 2009) from the issues and feelings – particularly with sensitive topics (Morgan et al., 2009).

For those who have integrated drawing into small-group research designs, the uses have been two-fold; first, the drawing activity is used as an ice-breaking exercise, thereby reducing the formality associated with non-anonymous research contexts, and second, the drawings themselves stimulate conversation and discussion. Drawing in group contexts acts as a catalyst (Zuboff, 1988, p. 141) to the ‘sharing [of] collective meanings, emotions and experiences’ (Ward & Shortt, 2012, p. 439). In group settings, then, discussion is generated by the group participants and the researcher rather than by the researcher alone. This has been argued to encourage reflections that challenge the tacit assumptions held by individuals regarding particular ‘truths’. Seeing the images produced by others can also be reassuring and confidence building but also encourage critical engagement and elicit more complex, multi-faceted narratives. Finally, participant-produced drawings have been used in reflective logs (Weber & Mitchell, 1995), but this is much less well documented and proliferated. We now turn to issues of process, that is, how the method has been practically employed.

Process

Processes or techniques adopted in participant-produced drawings can also vary a significant degree. Again, across multiple disciplines we have observed three participant-produced drawing techniques being employed: structured, semi-structured and unstructured techniques.

Structured techniques provide the participant with a drawing or diagram which they are asked to populate, amend or label in response to a series of questions (Meyer, 1991). The structured approach does offer more by way of comparative applicability in that all images share a basic framework from which the analysis can begin; however, the explicit structuring of the images means that researcher involvement and influence is much greater than with the unstructured or semi-structured techniques.

Semi-structured techniques, or ‘metaphorical analogy fantasising’ (Nossiter & Biberman, 1990) essentially ask participants to represent their feelings, organisations or whatever it might be, in a particular way. For example, participants might be asked to ‘represent your firm as an animal of any kind’; in this way, researchers are partially structuring the ‘visual encoding process’ (Meyer, 1991, p. 225). Nossiter and Biberman (1990) used

this approach in a study on corporate culture, and Weber and Mitchell in exploring popular cultural images of teachers. Indeed, the usefulness of metaphor has also been extended beyond visual images to include 3D representations of identity, life histories and relationships with the social world in Lego (see Gauntlett, 2007) and other media.

Unstructured approaches are by far the most common processes adopted in participant-produced drawing methods (for examples, see Kearney & Hyle, 2004; Kirkham et al., 2015; Morgan et al., 2009; Ward & Shortt, 2012; Zuboff, 1988). An unstructured approach provides participants with a blank sheet of paper upon which they are asked to respond to a particular question. They are often explicitly discouraged from labelling or using words but are reassured from the beginning of the process that they will have an opportunity to describe and discuss what they have drawn. This process is often referred to as a 'draw and write' technique (Mair & Kierans, 2007), in that participants can be asked to turn their completed image over and write a list of five to ten words associated with the image on the reverse. Unstructured techniques arguably limit researcher involvement by empowering participants to shape the research agenda (Ward & Shortt, 2012). In this sense, unstructured participant-produced drawing methods may be one of the most egalitarian forms of collaborative inquiry.

Analysis

Data analysis of visual methodologies has been, and continues to be, a murky area in that there is no consensual framework, approach or method that has been applied universally. This has led to a divergent approach to the analysis of visual images, including photographs, cultural artefacts, video and film. We will return to some of these issues in more depth, including the impact they have potentially had on the development of drawing as a visual method later in the chapter. In this section, we set out to review one of the most comprehensive and

detailed approaches to the analysis of participant-produced drawings, as set out by Guillemin (2004), which is a modification of Rose's critical visual methodology (2001).

There are two ideologies that relate to the use of participant-produced drawings, the first being psychoanalytically informed and the second a form of collaborative inquiry. Psychoanalytically informed approaches treat the visual artefact as material to be analysed by subject 'experts' with a view to uncovering, diagnosing or treating a subject's unconscious emotions and drives. Such methods of analysis are not reviewed here as they are beyond the scope of this chapter and have not constituted a 'research method' in business and management contexts to date. The second ideological framework, collaborative inquiry, regarding participant-produced drawings, will instead be the focus of the remainder of this section.

Collaborative inquiry is argued by some to be part of a broader feminist approach to research (Morgan et al., 2009) in that its aim is to reduce or eliminate hierarchies (Campbell & Wasco, 2000) within the research process in order to empower participants to share their own personal narratives, voice unspoken feelings and emotions, and feel comfortable enough to discuss sensitive topics. In pursuit of these goals, feminist-collaborative forms of inquiry are often open to more innovative research methods such as drawing as they offer an opportunity for deeper reflections. In this sense, drawings are seen 'as a way to explore the multiple and complex nature of human experience' (Morgan et al., 2009, p. 130). They offer another way of seeing and sense-making (Weick, 1979). Key to this approach, then, are the methods of analysis used to make sense of the drawings created by the research participants.

Drawings produced as part of a collaborative inquiry method are not to be treated as visual artefacts for objective deciphering. Instead the drawn images must be interpreted by the participant or artist themselves and not by the researcher. As Guillemin

(2004, p. 285) neatly articulates, ‘the drawings are both products and processes’, they are a snapshot of how that person is feeling at a particular point in time. In drawing the image, they may come to feel or see things differently, but this can only be understood with the help of the producer of that image. This sense-making or interpretation process is often carried out verbally, either in a group setting or in an individual interview, but can be done in the form of a reflective log or draw and write style exercises. What is most important, though, is that the visual artefacts are never seen or analysed in isolation – they must inform and be informed by the voice (either written or spoken) of the person who produced the work. Within the interpretivist paradigm of understanding this collaborative sense-making process is a matter of epistemological importance. Alleviating the burden of interpretation from the researcher makes it a collaborative exercise, thereby eliminating any risk of misinterpretation. A case in point example is illustrated in Figure 16.5 from Ward’s collection of drawings elicited from a yet unpublished study of Samaritan volunteers (see McMurray and Ward (2014) and Ward and McMurray (2016) for details of the wider project with Samaritans).

Samaritans is a UK-based listening charity whose purpose is to provide a non-judgemental space in which callers can explore their feelings. They are a volunteer run organisation that help support those in emotional distress, often suicidal, self-harming, depressed, lonely or in crisis. In 2012, Ward asked Samaritan volunteers to draw in response to the question ‘How does it feel to be a Samaritan?’ Figure 16.5 is an example of one of the images elicited from this process. This image of a man with the ideographic image of a heart on his chest could be objectively interpreted in many ways ... that Samaritans need to have a heart perhaps, the fact that there is only one person depicted might be seen to represent Samaritan volunteering as a lonely experience. Yet the verbal description of this image is perhaps much

more individual, touching and expressive of what being a Samaritan volunteer is like for this particular volunteer:

I often draw the person I am talking to in the first few minutes of the call ... it makes them human ... it reminds me that I am sitting in a room and so are they. (Samaritan volunteer)

In this way, the coupling of the image with the research participant’s voice not only generates a multi-sensory impact on the reader or audience which helps in communicating just a little more of ‘what it feels like to be a Samaritan’, but it also, as we and others have argued elsewhere, brings these emotional narratives to the fore. The act of drawing allows participants to access a different type of self-knowing, or at the very least, feel more willing and able to share those often hidden, private parts of their subjectivity.

In an attempt to provide a comprehensive approach to the analysis of the drawings produced by her participants, Guillemin’s (2004) modification of Rose’s critical visual methodology framework, coupled with a thematic analysis of the participant’s visual and verbal data, is one of the only attempts to formalise an approach to the analysis of participant-produced drawings. All other studies using the method have chosen to pursue more traditional thematic analyses of the verbal data alone, supported by replications of the images being described. Guillemin (2004) replicates Rose’s focus on the three sites of meaning that can occur in visual methodologies, these being in the production of the image, the image itself and the relationship between image and audience. These are said to overlap with another three ‘modalities’, i.e. technological, compositional and social. In Figure 16.6 below we reproduce Guillemin’s modification of Rose’s critical visual methodology framework (i.e. a list of questions that can offer fruitful areas for reflection and analysis), but stress that it should be used in conjunction with a thematic analysis of the participant’s own verbal interpretations of their own images as part of a collaborative

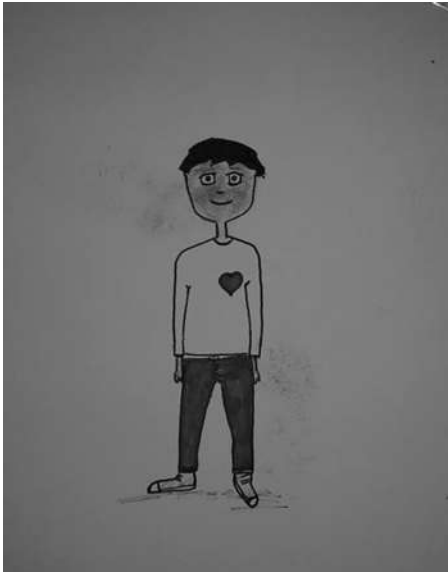


Figure 16.5 'How does it feel to be a Samaritan?'

inquiry process. For us, a better way of thinking about the questions in Figure 16.6 is to see them as a loose interview guide for supporting and guiding participants through the analysis and sense-making process involved in discussing their own drawings in relation to the topic of research.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPANT-PRODUCED DRAWINGS AS A RESEARCH METHOD

Why should we use participant-produced drawings as a research method? In what ways are such methods beneficial for research? And more specifically, what benefits do participant-produced drawings offer those who study *organisations*? We argue that participant-produced drawings enhance our understanding of the working worlds of the individuals and groups we research. If our aim is to collaboratively make sense of organisational life as we attempt to 'understand the phenomenon through the lived experiences of those who

live it. The aim, to represent the actor's construction of their lived experience ... to give them voice' (Thomas & Linstead, 2002, p. 76), then such a method makes this possible. Here, we suggest five core advantages to using this research method and why, when researching particular topics or settings, these methods should indeed be a necessary part of our scholarly endeavours.

The first advantage this method offers is the depth of discussion. Asking people to draw their experiences or feelings elicits rich stories, personal histories and individual journeys, and foregrounds the voices of participants. This is, of course, fundamental to constructionist claims and visual research more broadly. In particular, the stories participants tell when discussing their drawings, are commonly narratives that explore experiences over periods of time; the past, present and future are often included (Cross et al., 2006; Ward & Shortt, 2012). Such autobiographical, temporal accounts allow the researcher to delve deep into contexts and events the participant might not have been able to recount using words alone (see Weber & Mitchell, 1995). For example, by using participant-produced drawings with business school students we were able to acknowledge the temporal aspects of their learning and thus appreciate the experience of learning as fluid and dynamic (Ward & Shortt, 2012).

This takes us to the second advantage of using participant-produced drawing: the ability to access emotion. As Jensen et al. (2007) argue, 'non-rational forms of self-expression can elicit the non-verbal, tacit, emotional knowledge' (p. 359). It may not be that the drawing itself depicts emotion, as Kearney and Hyle (2004) suggest, it is in fact the subsequent narratives from participants that are emotionally charged. This is evident, for example, when researching managers' responses to change (Vince & Broussine, 1996) and in Guillemin's work researching women and their experiences of heart disease (2004). Giving participants space and *time* to draw before discussing the topic in question

arguably gives them time to provide a more considered response and one that articulates feelings and emotions rather than one that simply answers a researcher's question. Indeed, Kearney and Hyle (2004) advocate that this approach reveals 'more meaningful and honest verbal reports' (p. 380). Noted characteristics such as these are reminiscent of those rehearsed in art therapy (see Dalley, 1984). In relation to medical art therapy, Malchiodi (1999, p. 16) argues that 'art has the capacity to provide patients ... with a non-verbal voice to express both the rational and less rational beliefs about their perceptions ... 'In this sense, it is perhaps important for those who employ visual methods such as participant-produced drawings to consider what we might learn from art therapy and art-therapists (Kapitan, 2010).

Third, participant-produced drawings give the researcher the opportunity to access sensitive or difficult topics. Perhaps this is why participant-produced drawings have been used with some frequency in the field of art therapy and health and illness in order that researchers are able to discuss topics such as spinal injury (Cross et al., 2006), menopause (Guillemin, 1999), heart disease (Guillemin, 2004), chronic vaginal thrush (Morgan et al., 2009) or post-natal depression (Guillemin & Westall, 2008). Asking participants to draw something provides an outlet where they are able to articulate feelings around personal and private experiences and as Guillemin and Drew (2010, p. 5) suggest, they are able to 'express the unsayable' which, again, might not have been possible using words alone. This, in turn, leads us to our fourth advantage: by eliciting rich stories that reveal emotions and encourage a more 'affective' response and enable us to access more sensitive topics, participant-produced drawings help us move our research beyond the cognitive domain.

Fifth, participant-produced drawings allow us to address power dynamics. Traditional positivist management research can often be driven by the political interests of those in positions of power, yet in the case of

Production of the image:

- The context in which the image is produced
- When was it made?
- What events preceded the drawing, both in terms of the participant's condition and the relationship established between participant and researcher?
- Where was the image made?
- Who drew the image? Was the participant able to draw the image her- or himself, or was assistance required?
- What was the response of the drawer to the request to produce the image?
- What are the relations between the drawer and the subject of the image?

About the image:

- What is being shown? What are the components of the image? How are they arranged?
- What relationships are established between components of the image?
- What use is made of colour? What colours are used? What is the significance to the drawer of the colours used?
- What do the different components of the image signify? What is being represented?
- What knowledges are being deployed?
- Whose knowledges are excluded from this representation?
- Is this a contradictory image? (to other data collected, for example in interviews)

Relationship between image and audience:

- Who was the original audience for this image?
- Where is the viewer positioned in relation to the components of the image?
- What relation does this produce between the image and the viewers?
- Is more than one interpretation of the image possible?
- How is it redisplayed?

Figure 16.6

Source: Guillemin, 2004, pp. 284–5

constructionist, collaborative research, relationships with participants differ and we are able to access marginalised groups or those who are often powerless. As Packard (2008) argues, visual methodologies rebalance the

power dynamics between the researcher and participant(s), and since the pen (or camera) is in the hands of the participant, we are able to 'bridge the gap' between the two parties and shift authority away from the researcher. This in itself emphasises a point made in Lincoln and Guba's discussion on validity as authenticity within constructivist research whereby the 'authenticity criteria', they suggest, has 'strong moral and ethical overtones' (2003, p. 278).

Furthermore, as drawings are often used as part of a face-to-face interview, where the drawings are made by participants and an interview then conducted in order to explore why the participant drew that particular image, what it means to them, what it represents, how it makes them feel and so on, the drawing itself acts as a third party within this discussion. Both researcher and participant are usually looking at the image, exploring and examining it together. As an artefact then, the physical drawing becomes the focus and once again we see a 'redistribution of power' (Shortt & Warren, 2012, p. 24) between researcher and participant as the *participant* describes the image. Indeed, as Ward and Shortt (2012) found, the use of drawings within interview settings allows participants to shape their own agenda and direct the conversation according to their own feelings, reflections and responses to their drawings.

Outlined above are five benefits of participant-produced drawings; however, they are inherently connected by their overarching concern for enabling and empowering participants and, to a certain extent, researchers themselves (Gauntlett & Holzwarth, 2006; Guillemin & Drew, 2010). One final consideration in relation to the benefits of the use of participant-produced drawings, is perhaps to participants themselves. As researchers of organisations, business and management seek to dig deeper beyond the surface of 'logics of representation' (Czarniawska, 1999) or 'officialisations' (Bourdieu, 1990) to explore the messy, emotional and often challenging narratives and experiences that reside below the surface and yet are central to organisational

life, we perhaps need to consider an ethics of care (Ward & McMurray, 2016) and responsibility regarding the emotional welfare of our participants (see <http://visual-sociology.org/about/ethics-and-guidelines.html> and <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/421/1/MethodsReviewPaperNCRM-011.pdf> for more information on ethics and the visual). If we want them to open up about their emotions and feelings, we need to be prepared to handle them in empathetic, sophisticated and considerate ways (see Taylor and Statler (2014) for commensurate links to the practices of art-therapists). The documented therapeutic nature of art might be one way in which we can seek to support our participants through difficult times or experiences. As Malchiodi (1999, p. 15) states, 'opening up through self-expression can help people explore, release, and understand the source of emotional distress, ameliorate and alleviate trauma, and repair and resolve conflict'. This is not to say that participant-produced drawings are without their challenges. In this next section, we outline a number of challenges researchers seeking to employ these methods should be aware of.

CHALLENGES OF PARTICIPANT-PRODUCED DRAWINGS AS A RESEARCH METHOD

What challenges and issues should researchers seeking to employ participant-produced drawings as a research method be aware of? And more specifically, what challenges do they present for those studying *organisations*? Here we suggest five core challenges to using participant-produced drawing methods.

First, participant's fear and insecurities regarding their graphic aptitude is always going to be a feature of drawing as a research method. Some have argued that such fears act as a barrier to engagement (Kearney & Hyle, 2004; Stiles, 2004) whilst other have argued that drawing creates anxiety within

participants (Guillemin, 2004; Morgan et al., 2009). Morgan et al.'s (2009) study of women's experiences of chronic vaginal thrush revealed that in that context participants felt drawing exposed more of themselves and their lived experiences than the spoken word. In this sense, it could be argued that drawing involves a greater perceived risk for research participants than other verbal methods. It is for these reasons that researchers implementing these methods need to do so with care and sensitivity – continually being mindful of where and when individual participants are feeling particularly uncomfortable or challenged.

Second, drawing methods and the related approaches to analysis rely heavily on the spoken word of participants. Often, the primary empirical data for analysis and theory building are the verbal accounts elicited via the process of drawing. In that way, drawings play a supportive role to verbal cognitive data. Prosser (1998) goes so far as to argue that images are used to just break up written data, whilst Harrison (2002, p. 859) questions what visual methods provide that is different to or unavailable through words. Perhaps these types of critiques are rooted in a more well-versed challenge to visual methods, which relates to the scarcity of a formalised consensus on approaches to analysis.

Earlier we outlined a number of ways in which different research teams have approached their analysis of visual methods, but this continues to be something of an emergent and individualised approach. Thus, coupled with the continued dominance of positivistic epistemologies underpinning business and management research and organisational thinking, – drawing stands in stark contrast to the manipulatable, manageable, calculable and modelable quantitative data employed within this paradigm. Yet, as we discussed previously, perhaps the visual turn and growing number of studies embracing visual methods more broadly will, in time, redress this balance.

The fourth challenge that belies drawing as a research method in business and management contexts is, perhaps controversially, its

therapeutic legacy. It has been suggested elsewhere (Guillemin, 2004, p. 274) that drawing in a research context has potentially been stigmatised by its association with therapeutic or diagnostic methods employed in fields of clinical psychology or learning development. Drawing's long-standing association with children, those with learning disabilities and mental health conditions has perhaps tainted its use as a research method in non-health and education contexts, particularly business and management research. The extent to which this is a sensible analysis of the situation remains unclear; however, it does flag-up a related point that we have touched upon above. Drawings are argued by many to be a route to accessing emotions and feelings (Cross et al., 2006; Guillemin & Drew, 2010; Kearney & Hyle, 2004; Vince, 1995) – therefore researchers choosing to employ drawing as a method of research need to acknowledge, be mindful and be prepared for the emotional responses and reactions of participants. They may elicit great data in the form of the visual image and accompanying narratives, but ethically caring and managing that emotional process is a significant responsibility. This raises the broader question as to whether business and management researchers are qualified and prepared for the potential emotional and emotive responses that might be elicited by participant-produced drawing as a method of research. A challenge as significant as this may be usefully seen as a call for action, in relation to research that seeks to explore emotional, difficult and challenging aspects of organisational life, in that business and management scholars may require further support or training in developing the skills to responsibly and ethically cope and manage their own emotions and those of their participants. Perhaps there is scope in considering interdisciplinary collaborations with art therapy?

Fifth, is the pragmatic management, handling and publication of this type of data. Where participants are asked to apply pen to paper, researchers face the challenge of having to manage and store these original pieces

of artwork in their physical form. This is set against a backdrop of recent technological reform in data capture, handling, storage, privacy and analysis techniques. Hand-composed drawings require photographing and integrating into the transcriptions of the verbal data to which they purport. This can be a long and arduous process and few transcribers are used to or skilled in the transcription and integration of arts-based methods. With respect to the publication of visual images, including drawings used to be a significant issue in the dissemination of research findings, as academic journals and book publishers deterred or prohibited researchers from including drawings or images because of the associated cost. However, with the increased, if not ubiquitous, use of electronic publication platforms, this challenge has essentially been mitigated, making academic journals some receptive to alternative data.

CONCLUSION

Business, management and organisational research has been reluctantly receptive to the incumbent 'visual turn', particularly in relation to photography. Other visual and arts-based methods, however, have received comparably less attention and use within the discipline. At the same time, certain strands of organisational research have come to focus their efforts on exploring the complex, messy, dark, emotional and human experiences of work and employment contexts. Yet, perhaps paradoxically, such intellectual projects have, in the main, continued to employ 'traditional' research methods, i.e. participant observations and semi-structured interviews. In relation to future developments in the continuation of work that seeks to push deeper in explorations of the nature and texture of work, it is worthwhile for researchers to consider the use of arts-based and visual methods – in particular – drawing. We call for business and management research designs to be more confident in their

employment of drawing and acknowledge the benefits of this research method, as we have done, when exploring the human side of organisational life.

In terms of the future of drawing as a research method, what is apparent and inevitable is the transformation and evolution of methods through technological development. Being able to capture participant-produced drawings on tablets, for example, might enable researchers to capture and integrate images directly into transcripts and other data analysis packages, e.g. NVivo. This may well make the method more efficient and could even mean that participation could be widened geographically. For example, focus groups could be run virtually with drawings streamed onto the researcher's own tablet for viewing and discussion. However, decisions regarding the use of these types of technology also need to be counter-balanced with what they take away from the process, e.g. the physical and embodied act of drawing with a pen/pencil and paper, being able to fold the paper, scribble out without erasing, etc. Just as Edwards and Hart (2004) argue in their discussion of the materiality of photographs, examining how the material aspects of an image is integral to their meaning and use, and Taylor and Statler's (2014) thought-provoking exploration of the impact the medium of art (e.g. clay v Lego) used in therapeutic and education contexts has on the emotional energy of the patient or participant, are key reminders of just how important our choices of materials and mediums are in our research design. Particularly for researchers exploring the darker sides of organisational life, it is important to remember our responsibilities both to ourselves as researchers but also to our participants. Digging too deep can sometimes be painful, wearing and long-lasting.

Finally, drawing as a research method in business and management has the potential to help bridge disciplinary silos. In our pursuit to understand more about the complexity, darkness and lived experiences of work and organisational context, we have a greater duty of care to responsibly work through our own and also our participant's

difficult emotions. Perhaps, in recognition of this responsibility it is time to acknowledge that we might not have the expertise or experience to offer sufficient emotional support. Instead, art-therapists, councillors and other professionals with such expertise might be useful co-investigators to business and management researchers seeking to move beyond the surface or work and organisational life.

Whatever the future might hold for research into business and management contexts and issues, we would hope to see more researchers having the confidence, expertise and energy to explore a range of alternative visual and arts-based methods such as drawing.

REFERENCES

- Acevedo, B. (2015) <https://beatrizacevedoart.wordpress.com/2015/11/15/sketching-and-drawing-teaching-learning-and-living-beautifully/>
- Adler, P.T. (1970) Evaluation of the figure drawing technique: Reliability, factorial structure and diagnostic usefulness, *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 35(1), 52–7.
- Banks, M. (2001) *Visual Methods in Social Research*. London: Sage.
- Bell, E. & Davison, J. (2013) Visual management studies: Empirical and theoretical approaches, *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15(2), 167–84.
- Betensky, M.G. (1995) *What Do You See? Phenomenology of Therapeutic Art Expression*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990) *The Logic of Practice*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Burton, M. (2005) Foreword. In D. Waller and C. Sibbett (Eds.) *Art Therapy and Cancer Care*. Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press: xix–xxii.
- Campbell, R. & Wasco, S. (2000) Feminist approaches to social science: Epistemological and methodological tenets, *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 28(6): 773–91.
- Chaplin, E. (2004/1994) *Sociology and Visual Representation*. London: Routledge.
- Cowen, P. (1999) 'Drawn' into the community: Reconsidering the artwork of Latino adolescents, *Visual Sociology*, 14(1): 91–101.
- Cross, K., Kabel, A. & Lysack, C. (2006) Images of self and spinal cord injury: Exploring drawing as a visual method in disability research, *Visual Studies*, 21(2): 183–93.
- Czarniawska, B. (1999) Is it possible to be a constructionist consultant? *Management Learning*, 32(2): 253–66.
- Dalley, T. (1984) *Art as Therapy*. London: Routledge.
- Diem-Wille, G. (2001) A therapeutic perspective: The use of drawings in child psychoanalysis and social science. In T. Van Leeuwen and C. Jewitt (Eds.) *Handbook of Visual Analysis*. London: Sage, pp. 119–33.
- Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. & Jackson, P. (2012) *Management Research*. London: Sage.
- Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. & Lowe, A. (1991) *Management Research: An Introduction*. London: Sage.
- Edwards, E. & Hart, J. (Eds.) (2004) *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images*. New York: Routledge.
- Emmison, M. & Smith, P. (2000) *Researching the Visual: Images, Objects, Contexts and Interactions in Social and Cultural Inquiry*. London: Sage.
- Faulkner, R.R. (1982) Improvising on a triad. In J. Van Maanen, J.M. Dabbs and R.R. Faulkner (Eds.) *Varieties of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage, pp. 65–102.
- Freud, S. (1951) *The Interpretation of Dreams*. London: Wordsworth.
- Freud, S. (1973) *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.
- Fuller, P. (1984) Foreword. In T. Dalley (Ed.) *Art as Therapy: An Introduction to the Use of Art As a Therapeutic Technique*. London: Tavistock: ix–x.
- Ganesh, T. (2007) Commentary through visual data: A critique of the United States school accountability movement, *Visual Studies*, 22(1): 42–7.
- Gauntlett, D. (2007) *Creative Explorations: New Approaches to Identities and Audiences*. Oxford, UK: Routledge.
- Gauntlett, D. & Holzwarth, P. (2006) Creative and visual methods for exploring identities, *Visual Studies*, 21(1): 82–91.

- Goffman, E. (1963) *Stigma: Notes on the Management of a Spoiled Identity*. London: Penguin.
- Golden-Biddle, K. & Locke, K. (1993) Appealing work: An investigation of how ethnographic texts convince, *Organization Science*, 4(4), 595–616.
- Guillemin, M. (1999) 'Mauve: That's an older woman's colour' – Women's visual representations of menopause. In S. Feldman and M. Poole (Eds.) *Older Women in Australia*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin: 56–69.
- Guillemin, M. (2004) Understanding illness: Using drawings as a research method, *Qualitative Health Research*, 14(2): 272–289.
- Guillemin, M. & Drew, S. (2010) Questions of process in participant-generated visual methodologies, *Visual Studies*, 25(2): 175–88.
- Guillemin, M. & Westall, C. (2008) Gaining insight into women's knowing of postnatal depression using drawings. In P. Liamputtong and J. Rumbold (Eds.) *Knowing Differently: Arts-based and Collaborative Research Methods*. New York: Nova Science, pp. 121–39.
- Harrison, B. (2002) Seeing health and illness worlds: Using visual methodologies in a sociology of health and illness. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 24(6): 856–72.
- Heath, S. & Cleaver, E. (2004) Mapping the spatial in shared household life: A missed opportunity? In C. Knowles and P. Sweetman (Eds.) *Picturing the Social Landscape: Visual Methods and the Sociological Imagination*. Oxford, UK: Routledge, pp. 65–78.
- Hill, A. (1945) *Art versus Illness*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Hill, A. (1951) *Painting out Illness*. London: Williams & Norgate.
- International Visual Sociology Association Code of Research Ethics and Guidelines: <http://visualsociology.org/about/ethics-and-guidelines.html>, last accessed 1 August 2016.
- inVisio (2008–2009) *International Network for Visual Studies in Organisations*, www.invisio.org.
- Jensen T.S., Voight, J.R., Piras, E.M. & Thorsen, B.R. (2007) Drawings as a link to emotional data: A slippery territory. In M. Reynolds and R. Vince (Eds.) *Experiential Learning and Management Education*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, pp. 345–360.
- Kapitan, L. (2010) The empathic imagination of art therapy: Good for the brain? *Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*, 27(4):158–159.
- Kara, H. (2015) *Creative Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press.
- Kearney, K.S. & Hyle, A.E. (2004) Drawing out emotions: The use of participant-produced drawings in qualitative inquiry, *Qualitative Research*, 4(3): 361–82.
- Kirkham, J.A., Smith, J.A. & Havsteen-Franklin, D. (2015) Painting pain: An interpretive phenomenological analysis of representations of living with chronic pain, *Health Psychology*, 34(4): 398–406.
- Laing, J. (1984) Art therapy in prisons. In T. Dalley (Ed.) *Art as Therapy: An Introduction to the Use of Art As a Therapeutic Technique*. London: Tavistock, pp. 140–56.
- Lilienfeld, S., Wood, J. & Garb, H. (2000) The scientific status of projective techniques, *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 1(2): 27–66.
- Lincoln, S. & Guba, E. (2003) Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (Eds.) *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 253–91.
- Mair, M. & Kierans, C. (2007) Descriptions as data: Developing techniques to elicit descriptive materials in social research, *Visual Studies*, 22(2): 120–36.
- Malchiodi, C. (1999) *Medical Art Therapy with Adults*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Mannay, D. (2010) Making the familiar strange: Can visual research methods render the familiar setting more perceptible? *Qualitative Research*, 10(1): 91–111.
- McMurray, R. & Ward, J. (2014) 'Why would you want to do that?': Defining emotional dirty work, *Human Relation*, 67(9): 1123–43.
- Meyer, A. (1991) Visual data in organizational research, *Organization Science*, 2(2): 218–36.
- Miller, B. (1984) Art therapy with the elderly and the terminally ill. In T. Dalley (Ed.) *Art as Therapy: An Introduction to the Use of Art As a Therapeutic Technique*. London: Tavistock, pp. 127–39.
- Mitchell, C. (2011) *Doing Visual Research*. London: Sage.

- Morgan, M., McInerney, F., Rumbold, J. & Liamputtong, P. (2009) Drawing the experience of chronic vaginal thrush and complementary and alternative medicine, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12(2): 127–46.
- Muñoz, C.A., Mosey, S. & Binks, M. (2011) Developing opportunity-identification capabilities in the classroom: Visual evidence for changing mental frames, *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 10(2): 277–95.
- Nossiter, V. & Biberman, G. (1990) Projective drawings and metaphor: Analysis of organizational culture, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 5(3): 13–16.
- Packard, J. (2008). 'I'm gonna show you what it's really like out here': The power and limitation of participatory visual methods, *Visual Studies*, 23(1), 63–77.
- Pink, S. (2005) *The Future of Visual Anthropology*. London: Routledge.
- Pink, S. (2007) *Doing Visual Ethnography*. London: Sage.
- Prosser, J. (1998) *Image-Based Research: A Sourcebook for Qualitative Researchers*. Bristol, PA: Falmer Press.
- Reitman, F. (1950) *Psychotic Art*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Riley, S. (1999) *Contemporary Art Therapy with Adolescents*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Rippin, A. Shortt, H. & Warren, S. (forthcoming) Dress and the female professional: A case study of *Working Woman*. In C. Elliott, S. Mavin, V. Stead and J. Williams (Eds.) *Volume V: Gender, Media and Organization: Challenging Mis(s)Representations of Women Leaders and Managers in the ILA Women and Leadership Book Series*.
- Rose, G. (2001) *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*. London: Sage.
- Rose, G. (2012) *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*. London: Sage.
- Shortt, H. (2010) *The Hair Salon: Constructions of Space and Identity*. University of Bath, School of Management, Bath, UK.
- Shortt, H. & Warren, S. (2012). Fringe benefits: Valuing the visual in narratives of hairdressers' identities at work, *Visual Studies*, 27(1), 18–34.
- Stanczak, G.C. (2007) *Visual Research Methods*. London: Sage.
- Stiles, D. (1998) Pictorial representation. In C. Cassell and G. Symon (Eds.) *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*. London: Sage, pp. 190–210.
- Stiles, D. (2004) Pictorial representation. In C. Cassell and G. Symon (Eds.) *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*. London: Sage, pp. 127–39.
- Stiles, D. (2011) Disorganization, disidentification and ideological fragmentation: Verbal and pictorial evidence from a British business school, *Culture and Organization*, 17(1): 5–30.
- Stiles, D. (2014) Drawing as a method of organizational analysis. In S. Warren, E. Bell and J. Schroeder (Eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Visual Organization*. Oxford, UK: Routledge, pp. 227–42.
- Stott, J. & Males, B. (1984) Art therapy for people who are mentally handicapped. In T. Dalley (Ed.) *Art as Therapy: An Introduction to the Use of Art As a Therapeutic Technique*. London: Tavistock, pp. 111–26.
- Taylor, S. & Statler, M. (2014) Material matters: Increasing emotional engagement in learning, *Journal of Management Education*, 38(4): 586–607.
- Thomas, R. & Linstead, A. (2002) Losing the plot? Middle managers and identity, *Organization*, 9(1), 71–93.
- van Leeuwen, T. (2005). *Introducing Social Semiotics*. London: Psychology Press.
- Vince, R. (1995) Working with emotions in the change process: Using drawings for team diagnosis and development, *Organisations and People*, 2(1): 11–17.
- Vince, R. & Broussine, M. (1996) Paradox, defense and attachment: Accessing and working with emotions and relations underlying organizational change, *Organization Studies*, 17(1): 1–21.
- Waller, D. (1984) A consideration of the similarities and differences between art teaching and art therapy. In T. Dalley (Ed.) *Art as Therapy: An Introduction to the Use of Art As a Therapeutic Technique*. London: Tavistock, pp. 1–14.
- Ward, J. & McMurray, R. (2016) *The Dark Side of Emotional Labour*. Oxford, UK: Routledge.

- Ward, J. & Shortt, H. (2012) Evaluation in management education: A visual approach to drawing out emotion in student learning, *Management Learning*, 44(5): 435–52.
- Ward, J. & McMurray, R. (2016) *The Dark Side of Emotional Labour*, Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Warren, S. (2002) Show me how it feels to work here: Using photography to research organizational aesthetics, *ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organizations*, 2(3): 224–45.
- Warren, S. (2005) Photography and voice in critical qualitative management research, *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 18(6): 861–82.
- Warren, S. (2008) Empirical challenges in organizational aesthetics research: Towards a sensual methodology, *Organization Studies*, 29(4): 559–80.
- Weber, S. & Mitchell, C. (1995) *That's Funny, You Don't Look Like a Teacher: Interrogating Images and Identity in Popular Culture*. London: Falmer Press.
- Weick, K. (1979) *The Social Psychology of Organising*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Wiles, R., Prosser, J., Bagnoli, A., Clark, A., Davies, K., Holland, S. & Renold, E. (2008) Visual ethics: Ethical issues in visual research. ESRC National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper. ESRC National Centre for Research Methods. NCRM/ 011 <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/421/1/MethodsReviewPaperNCRM-011.pdf> (last accessed 01 August 2016).
- Zuboff, S. (1988) *In the Age of the Smart Machine: The Future of Work and Power*. New York: Basic Books.

Analysing Web Images

Katrina Pritchard and Rebecca Whiting

INTRODUCTION

Having been relatively neglected in business and management research there is now increasing interest in researching the visual in a variety of forms. Within business and management, visual research has been used to analyse the way in which organizations use images, particularly in formal reporting (for example, Davison, 2010) and, via participatory approaches, as a means of exploring the experience of day to day work across a range of organizational contexts (for example, Shortt & Warren, 2012).

Within the confines of this chapter it is not possible to provide an exhaustive or even extensive review of the burgeoning literature on visual analysis in general. There is a wide range of useful resources which offer advice and guidance on different approaches, including many excellent books and journal papers (see, for example, Acevedo & Warren, 2012; Bell & Davison, 2013; Davison et al., 2012; Margolis & Pauwels, 2011; Meyer et al., 2013).

Researchers have also considered the importance of the internet to contemporary organizing and recognized that understanding how organizations use the internet (in recruitment, marketing and research activities, for example) has the potential to offer insight into many areas of concern to business and management scholars. The specific relevance will of course vary between different research topics and approaches. Some researchers may want to focus on organizational use of the internet, while others might be interested in employees' online commentary on organizational life. However, it is also apparent that the internet represents a critical communicative context for understanding organizing as an emergent activity that also takes place outside traditional work places. Web images are of relevance to researchers interested in any and all of the above, not least because they are integral to much internet usage.

However, to date, business and management studies of the web have largely focused on textual rather than visual aspects of the

internet (Pauwels, 2011). Perhaps similarly to the way in which the embodied experience of an interview is often reduced to a textual transcript, so engagement with the internet via web interfaces has often been reduced to an analysis of the textual components. Given the ever-increasing visualization of web media (see Hodgkin, 2016 for examples of 1990s websites for comparison), it is becoming harder to ignore the volume of data discarded when such an approach is applied. Despite extensive exploration in other fields, web images are not commonly investigated within business and management research and there is correspondingly less discussion of their analysis (Bell & Davison, 2013; Emmison et al., 2012).

While there are many similarities with other forms of visual analysis, there are also important differences for the researcher to consider. In particular, the variety and fluidity of web images create particular research challenges (Pauwels, 2011), especially when considered alongside moves towards quantitative 'big data' (Dutton, 2013) understandings of the web. Such moves are of course themselves producing new forms of web imagery (see www.keywebmetrics.com/2013/07/big-data-visualizations/ for examples as varied as plate tectonics to the evolution of crayons).

After discussing the broad methodological issues in the early sections, later in this chapter we use examples from our own research (Pritchard & Whiting, 2015) which explores constructions of age at work, to provide a more detailed explanation of our experience of analysing one form of web image, the stock photograph. Used widely across the web and across a range of organizational processes, these images are potentially influential in the (re)construction of understandings of age and ageing at work. While there are inevitable limitations in focusing on one particular form of web image, this does allow us to explore more specific methodological issues so that readers can then adapt and apply these to their own research contexts. Therefore, drawing on our own experiences we offer some

preliminary guidance for researchers in this area while recognizing that the internet is a constantly evolving and sometimes unstable research context which requires re-appraisal in each new research encounter. Before this discussion, we first consider the research opportunities offered by web images.

WHY SHOULD BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT RESEARCHERS BE INTERESTED IN WEB IMAGES?

As highlighted previously, the internet has become a prominent part of contemporary life (Kiesler, 2014) and the web has become a key area of business and commercial activity. In addition to companies that provide internet services (such as, for example, Google, Facebook and Twitter), many organizations use the internet to recruit employees, promote their products, orchestrate brands, obtain customer feedback and gather data related to their commercial activities (Loader & Dutton, 2012). In this way internet usage has become embedded in key organizational processes which may involve the use, circulation and consumption of web images.

In a wider context, topics of relevance to organizations and organizational life also feature in debates and discussions on various web media as groups and individuals engage with the internet to debate, promote or campaign with respect to management issues (Muralidharan et al., 2011; Waters & Jamal, 2011). Again, images are embedded in such debates. Take, for example, debates regarding the future of the Port Talbot steel works in Wales in 2016. Coverage on a range of social media and news websites includes still and moving images of the plant at sunset, aerial photos of the area, pictures of protestors and banners, photographs of gleaming steel products and grimy furnaces along with individual photographs of key players in the government and industry (e.g. Kelsey, 2016; White, 2016). Various infographics, maps and other forms of image also feature

across a wide range of internet sites and media (e.g. BBC, 2016). All of these images are produced and consumed as understandings of the steel industry in the UK are constructed and reconstituted across organizational boundaries. Researchers interested in a range of institutional, organizational and employee-related aspects of business and management research might all conceivably be interested in such images. In sum, it is important to recognize that key issues of interest to business and management research are entwined with internet use. This has 'impelled scholars to expand their view of organization ... [re-examining] fundamental questions of organizational boundaries' (Sproull et al., 2007, p. 277).

Historically, internet research originated with examinations of corporate websites as business and management researchers tried to understand how organizations went about representing themselves on these new media. This has developed as researchers examined how organizational practices such as evaluation (Orlikowski & Scott, 2013) and recruitment have moved online, with interest in recruitment particularly prompted by increased use of social media (Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Madera, 2012). Here we can see how boundaries of organizations and organizational processes are challenged when web use is the topic of exploration, as a variety of actors may be involved. For example, recruitment activities might involve traditional job advertisements but also other forms of marketing and organizational promotion across a variety of channels. While such research in organizational use of the internet has continued, others have considered how issues as varied as generations at work (Pritchard & Whiting, 2014), corporate social responsibility (Coupland, 2005), diversity (Meriläinen et al., 2009, Singh & Point, 2006) and work–life balance (Mescher et al., 2010) are socially constructed on the web. Thus research is starting to move beyond traditional organizational boundaries.

However, it is still the case that most studies focus on textual aspects of web representation

and/or communication, as in the above examples which examine constructs of interest to management scholars. While many studies include consideration of the ways text is represented and the presentation of website interfaces, web images have received less attention, despite explicit calls in areas such as gender studies (Acker, 2012). This is not the case in fields such as sociology, communication or media studies for example (Bell & Davison, 2013). Here, studies cover considerable breadth ranging from investigation into young girls' consumption of media images (Jackson et al., 2012) to representation of disease (Asberg & Lum, 2010), child poverty (Fink & Lomax, 2014) and the digitalization of war (Chouliarakis, 2015). Others in these fields have looked at the role of the web image in communication processes more broadly, considering new genres and analysing forms of representation (Adami, 2015; Caple & Knox, 2012; Koliska & Roberts, 2015). These citations merely hint at the range and scope of literature available since an extensive review is beyond the scope of this chapter. Individuals researching specific topics should bear in mind the need to venture beyond traditional boundaries of business and management studies to explore literature relevant to their particular undertaking.

Where research in business and management studies has included a consideration of web images, our review suggests that a common approach is to categorize and count the visual elements (Elliott & Robinson, 2014). For example, Delmestri et al. (2015) present an analysis of the emblems and logos of 821 universities in a study of web-branding which uses content analysis to produce a typology of representations. This offers a useful consideration of a particular genre, but sees the image translated and quantified, taking it beyond the scope of a volume which focuses on qualitative research.

Therefore, while Emmison et al. (2012) recently highlighted how using web images poses both advantages (wide range and vast quantity of accessible images) and disadvantages (danger of overload and problems

of authenticity) to researchers, it remains an under-researched genre of visual image in business and management studies. However, before we can consider the analysis process in detail it is important to unpack the form and variety of web images available.

WHAT ARE WEB IMAGES?

Before considering what we might do with web images within a particular research project, it is first worth considering what sort of data we are dealing with. At first glance the answer to this question might appear simple since surely a web image is any image that is accessed via the web, but this hides a huge complexity.

We start with what we mean by ‘the web’. Here we are using this term as shorthand for Web 2.0, which refers to the evolution of the internet into a more interactive space (Coover, 2011; Fleischer, 2011). The terms web and internet are very commonly used but belie the variety of technologies involved and the myriad ways we might engage with others via these technologies (Markham, 2008). In some cases, web media recreate or make more easily accessible familiar print formats (such as a newspaper or company brochure). However, new forms of web media and means of communicating (such as blogging and tweeting) are now available. Organizations might use the internet to simply move an organizational process online, but new processes and means of organizing might also emerge, all of which can incorporate a wide variety of images.

How we interact with the content and each other (as we like, share, recommend or retweet for example), both within and between different media, creates a dynamic context (Pauwels, 2011) across which images are scattered (Bell et al., 2014). The constantly changing nature of what might be available as data makes this a particularly challenging environment in which to conduct research (Hare et al., 2014).

As the web has evolved and is used in ever more complex ways by an increasing array of users (inside and outside of organizations) for a seemingly endless list of purposes, so images are spread and shared across our interactions (Bell et al., 2014). Our engagement with web content thus becomes more complex as Fleischer suggests that ‘a new type of active subject emerges: the prosumer (producer and consumer)’ (2011, p. 538). This complicates our understanding of who has created or produced an image on the one hand and who consumes or views it on the other. At the same time, it is suggested that boundaries between the online virtual world and our offline experiences are becoming increasingly blurred (Tonks et al., 2015). Images (along with many other forms of content) may move between these ‘worlds’ as we share them both virtually and in other forms of interaction. Within this complex context, Rămö goes so far as to suggest that in ‘today’s hyper-mediated society, images are in higher circulation than words and print, and there is a shifting relationship between word and image’ (2011, p. 374). To illustrate this, taking an example of one form of image and one form of sharing, Tonks et al. (2015) report that at least 250 billion photos have now been uploaded to Facebook.

From our own experience, we suggest that reflexivity in a research project involving web images needs to start with an appraisal of our own understandings of the internet. In particular we suggest that as researchers we should unpack our own use and understanding of these complex digital contexts (Pritchard & Whiting, 2012a). We found that our personal and research use of the internet shaped our views on how we ‘saw’ different images and regarded them as data. Indeed, as our research in this area has progressed so our own use of various social media such as blogs (see, for example, our own research blog: <https://ageatwork.wordpress.com/>) and twitter (e.g. via @ageatwork) has increased as we use these to share and discuss our research. In this way, the internet has become both the subject of and the medium for our own reflexivity.

Having considered the complex context of the web, we now review our understandings of web images. Given the variability and complexity of web images, it is useful to apply a framework that can help us make sense of these data as we encounter them. Baetens (2013, p. 180) suggests that we can take three different approaches to understanding a web image depending on whether we focus our attention on ‘the image properties, its use and or its social or cultural status’. Looking broadly at these areas is often the first step as the researcher seeks to unpack or discover what can seem rather basic information about the image before it is subjected to what we might think of as analysis proper (Pauwels, 2011).

Below we use these different foci as prompts to pose questions that enable us to unpack a web image:

- Image properties: What form does the image take? What do we know about the origination of the image?
- Image use: How does the image sit within a particular web context? How are images experienced differently via different forms of access?
- Social/cultural status: What is the purpose of the image? How is it being re-used or remarked upon?

What Form Does the Image Take?

At the most basic level this involves deciding that we know what we are looking at. Making an initial assessment of the form of image is a useful starting point. For example, it is important to consider whether the image is still or moving and what medium has been used. It might be possible to assign an image to a particular genre such as a cartoon, a map or a photograph (or a specific sub-genre such as the stock photo, as we explore later). Indeed, it has been suggested that we are seeing new genres emerge, such as the selfie (Koliska & Roberts, 2015). However, this categorization may not always be straightforward. An image may be a composite of forms either originally or because it has become composite as it is

posted to the web (for example, a photograph of a painting). Further changes can occur as an image moves across the internet and is shared in different ways.

Different visual media have well-established research traditions and it will often be necessary to consider these further once an understanding of the form of web image is reached. For example, Barthes’ (1977, 1981) work on photography is still very much in use when analysing photographs on the web despite predating widespread internet usage for the posting or sharing of photographs. However, when web images comprise complex or composite forms and are not easily categorized or fit into many categories, they may need to be analysed from multiple perspectives. This may have implications for how the research project proceeds and in particular for the number of images that can be analysed. Later on, we explore these implications in an example of our own research practice.

What Do We Know About the Origination of the Image?

We might suppose that an image used in a particular web context has been created specifically for that purpose. However, it is common for images to be purchased (from a stock image agency for example), or acquired via other (sometimes unofficial) means and then re-used. Some images may have been shared and circulated many times and perhaps been modified with each use. In our own research on age at work, we have found images were sometimes manipulated to increase the apparent age differences of those portrayed. In one example from a news site, we found that an image posted to illustrate a story about the battle between generations which was very different from the original found on the photographer’s own webpages, which was labelled as showing a different sort of battle, one between political parties. The terms ‘airbrushing’ and ‘photoshopping’ are now in common use to refer to the general practice of digitally editing

photographs. Such digital editing may also include cases where an image has been censored via cropping, removing elements, pixelation or other form of redaction.

We might be tempted to assume that those images used by organizations are indeed images of that organization, its members, its buildings or materials. However, it is important to consider that usage is no guarantee that we know the origin of an image. Similarly, we might assume that images posted on a personal webpage or social media account are taken or developed by the person to whom that account belongs. A popular news story (BBC, 2015) covered (with use of web images) the argument about ownership and rights to a ‘selfie’ produced when a monkey took its own photograph by pressing a camera left on a tripod, illustrating the range of actors that might need to be considered. Moreover, we are seeing an increasing blurring between off and online contexts as it becomes ever easier to repurpose images (for example, by scanning) for use on the web. The issue of authenticity is thus a common area of discussion amongst those that analyse web images. For example, Rawlinson and Perraudin (2015) highlighted the issues that arise when stock photos are used to represent ‘real’ people (in this case individuals in receipt of what the UK government terms ‘out of work’ benefits) in promotional materials (here such accounts were later described as illustrative stories). Although originally part of a printed leaflet, both images and text were widely shared on the web via various social media as their authenticity became the subject of widespread debate.

How Does the Image Sit Within a Particular Web Context?

We can no longer talk of the web or the internet in singular or static terms. An image might be encountered in a huge variety of ways on the web, sometimes intentionally but also unintentionally (for example due to autoplay, malware or pop-up adverts while

browsing). Indeed, the autoplay (in which a video plays automatically when the website is loaded) of moving images on some websites has been hotly debated, particularly when the individual might not otherwise choose to view the footage (for example, the autoplay on some websites of footage of a shooting, Tomchak & Wilmer, 2015).

For those interested in researching management and business, an image might be the gateway to an organization’s website or might offer an interactive means of following a particular news story about an employment-related issue (Coover, 2011). Some images might be permanently available, but others might appear only for a short space of time. An image may only be visible for a few days before being replaced by a more recent representation or perhaps disappear as the accompanying text or other web elements are deemed redundant. In our own research, we encountered a situation where an organization released a report related to the topic of age at work via their website. Our initial view of the report showed an image (stock photograph) of ‘hoodies’ had been used to illustrate a group of young people on the report cover; however, when re-visiting the organization’s webpage a few days later we found that the image had been changed to one of smiling, smartly dressed young people.

How Are Images Experienced Differently Via Different Forms of Access?

The web, and therefore web images, can be accessed via many different technological means. At one time a desktop or laptop computer was the primary means through which we experienced the internet. Handheld devices such as smartphones and tablets are now common place with wearables¹ seen as the new emergent technology. However, other fixed access devices such as game consoles and smart televisions are also increasing in popularity.

To explore the differences, we can compare our experience of using a web or social media site via, for example, a computer and a hand-held device such as a smartphone. How we are able to view the image and interact with it will differ depending on the device capabilities. However, the web context surrounding an image is often context sensitive and may also reflect our personal internet usage. In our research, we found a wide variety of advertising appeared depending on which of us had accessed the webpage to download the image, advertising that was also influenced by other family members' use of our devices.

What Is the Purpose of the Image?

While this can be the subject of in-depth analysis, it is also useful to ask this question at a high level, perhaps when the researcher first encounters the image (Schroeder, 2007). Often we infer the purpose of an image based on our personal experience of the web and the norms that we are familiar with. We have already commented that a reflexive review of our own assumptions is a useful starting point in the research process. However, a further question to ask here is what we assume about the purpose of the image when we first view it; did we categorize it in some way as for example an advertising image, as a photo of a particular person such as a CEO, or see it as capturing an event that is reported in the news. In this way our initial assessments could lead us to considering the ways in which the web image is being positioned in relation to organizational processes. So extrapolating from the above: an advertising image in relation to marketing; an image of a CEO in relation to leadership; or an image used to illustrate debates about senior management pay. As well as viewing the image itself, this assessment may involve consideration of the positioning of the image in relation to text and, in particular, if there are textual cues surrounding the image. Captions and sub-headings can be of critical importance here (Caple, 2006) as

well as relations to other images or features of the webpage. At this stage it may become essential to consider the focus of the image itself in relation to the research question and consider whether analysis of other elements might be included. Most commonly in business and management studies this might include adopting a broader discursive approach to consider text and images together (Bailey et al., 2009) or extending this to a multimodal analysis which reflects an interest in 'different modes and media of communication' (Bamberg, 2010, p. 897).

How Has It Been Re-used or Remarked Upon?

Rose has highlighted the need to pay attention to the online circulation of web images (2015) in addition to her previously identified 'three sites of production, the image itself and its audiencing' (2012, p. 19). In the examples above of selfies (whether by animals or humans) and those in receipt of government benefits, we have already seen how circulation and comments online can provide a further focus of analysis. This recognizes that images that might start off within a particular organizational process or context do not necessarily remain contained within it. This may require a research approach that moves beyond downloading or collecting an image for analysis to one which involves tracking or following an image over a period of time. This may pose further challenges for the researcher in deciding where and for how long such tracking might continue although the availability of free tools such as Google image search (which enables search by uploaded photo as well as text search term) can prove useful here.

Asking these questions about the image properties, use and status (Baetens, 2013) offers a useful starting point for exploring web images. The answers to these questions may not be straightforward and several iterations may be necessary during a research

project as the researchers' understanding shifts and changes as they become more familiar with the research context. However, it is also important for a researcher to consider in detail the particular area of web imagery they are planning to research. Our own interest in web images has to date focused on a particular form – the stock photograph.

Stock images tend to be deliberately constructed using actors to depict a scene which may utilize props or staging (Ward, 2007). They are generally used to avoid the cost and time implications of commissioning a new photograph; this is especially useful for organizations who wish to quickly access a range of quality images. Organizations such as Alamy and Getty act as a mediator between photographers (both professional and amateur) and those seeking to use the images (van Dijck, 2008). Indeed, it is usually possible to identify a stock image by the attribution to a photo agency which may appear either instead of or alongside the photographer's name when the image is displayed. A successful stock image needs to be highly saleable; it must therefore fit a broad range of requirements and thus they may be generic and stereotypical (Ward, 2007). There are several stages or constructions of the image. First, the photographer's own ideas of what the image might represent, but, second, this may then be reviewed and repositioned (for example, by tagging the image with a variety of popular labels) by the stock image agency to maximize sales. Third, those purchasing the image do so with a particular use in mind. Therefore, it is important to consider that 'the purchased image goes through a stage of recontextualization – combination with texts and other images and graphic elements during which it is often substantially altered' (Frosh, 2001, p. 634). Finally, of course, the image is subject to interpretation as we view it alongside other elements via the web. (See both Frosh (2001, 2002) and Machin (2004) for a more extensive consideration of the stock image industry.)

Stock images are regarded as significant 'cultural text[s]' (Milestone & Meyer, 2012, p. 3)

since 'we gradually come to accept them as showing us how the world really is' (Machin & van Leeuwen, 2007, p. 157). Stock photos are also important to organizational life particularly as they become enrolled in the construction of relevant subject positions such as, using an example from our own research, the 'older worker'. Frosh highlights that despite their wide use across a range of media, there has been an 'alarming scholarly and critical neglect' (2001, p. 626) of stock images across a range of fields. In the next section we provide a more detailed example of our own research of this type of web image.

ANALYSING WEB IMAGES: AN EXAMPLE

In this section, we offer our own research as an example of analysing web images. This is not presented as ideal or best practice, but rather as a means of reflexively exploring the opportunities and challenges. Our overall research project includes consideration of a range of textual and visual data and recognizes these as discursive resources which encompass a range of 'semiotic activity' (Fairclough, 1995, p. 54). Within this research we examine web data that represents a critical communicative context for understanding constructions of age and ageing at work. From this perspective, images can normalize particular ways of being; legitimating some categories of identity or subject positions (Maguire & Hardy, 2009) in relation to age and work and denying and problematizing others. It is important to highlight therefore that our research does not take place within a particular organization, but rather examines how understandings of age at work are constructed via web media that in turn shape and are shaped by day to day organizational life.

As part of this broader research project on age at work, one particular investigation explored web images of men and women of various ages to answer the research question:

Table 17.1 Key stages in analysing web images

Stage 1: Sample review	Detailed review of the whole data set was necessary to refine the sample to focus on the specific research question posed in this part of the research. Practical and ethical considerations (see also Whiting & Pritchard, 2018) were also taken into account.
Stage 2: Visual analysis approaches selected & applied	The approaches to visual analysis were selected based on fit and appropriateness given the range of images within the final sample. Researcher analysis was carried out applying three visual analytic frameworks to the sample.
Stage 3: Photo-elicitation exercise	Group photo-elicitation was conducted with a sub-sample of three images.
Stage 4: Drawing together analytic insights	Thematic analysis of participant responses with photo-elicitation prompted a further iteration of our own analysis. Findings were developed.

How are understandings of gendered ageing constructed and interpreted via stock photos? (see Pritchard & Whiting, 2015).

Elsewhere we have discussed our approach to collecting and analysing a variety of web data to examine understandings of age at work (Pritchard & Whiting, 2012a, 2014). Our overall study involved the systematic collection of web material about age at work using internet tools in a daily automated search process over 150 days during 2011–12 (see Pritchard & Whiting, 2012a and also Whiting & Pritchard, 2018). Table 17.1 summarizes the key stages of our subsequent research in relation to analysing web images.

In the following sections we expand on these stages to describe our approach to analysing web images.

Stage 1: Sample Review

The first step was to sort the data identified by the automated tools. This was manually reviewed and downloaded. Various visual images including photographs, cartoons, video and infographics were included in these data. Using the research question as a guide, the process of sample review included:

- A review of web image forms collected. Based on this review, we made a decision to include only still photographic images within this particular analytic process.
- A review of practical and ethical issues. Practical issues considered included image quality and

availability of subject and copyright information. Images were excluded from the sample where there was no identifying information enabling us to track the copyright of the image, where the image was poor quality or comprised named individuals (since these would be difficult to obtain permission for use and would likely present ethical issues).

- A content review of the 120 images remained in the data set after the first two stages of sample review. Working separately at first we each reviewed visual content and image properties (as discussed earlier in this chapter and drawing on Baetens, 2013). We then met to share our initial impressions of each image via an initial stage of description that is often recommended in visual analysis (Schroeder, 2007).
- A decision to focus on stock images was reached. While there were many different types of still photographs within the initial sample, our review identified that the majority of the images being used in online news stories that most closely related to our topic of interest were stock photographs. We then moved on to consider questions of image use (as outlined earlier and based on Baetens, 2013). This prompted us to look further at the literature on this image type (for example, Machin, 2004) and as a result we decided to focus on stock photographs in subsequent stages of analysis.

This decision to focus analysis on a particular form is a common approach adopted in research that aims to offer an in-depth analysis. We suggest this is sometimes a necessary pragmatic decision to make the subsequent analysis more manageable and to deliver outputs within a reasonable timescale.

All stock images were then reviewed to ensure relevance to our research question; we then selected those portraying a range of ages and that encompassed some aspect of work. For example, we excluded images of students in education and of older people pursuing leisure activities in retirement. The resulting sample size (16) was not set as a target but emerged from an iterative review as we worked separately and then together to review the images. Each researcher first completed an independent review and then we compared our selections. Photographs identified by both researchers were earmarked for further analysis and we then debated other selections before making a joint decision on their inclusion or exclusion. At this stage, our discussion expanded to consider many of those questions presented earlier as we reviewed and debated image properties, use and status (Baetens, 2013).

From this description it can be seen that we went through a fairly lengthy process to select our final 16 images for more detailed analysis. At each stage it is important to consider how this process of selecting images might impact the focus or scope of the research and of course the ability to generate insight relevant to the research question at hand.

Stage 2: Visual Analysis Approaches Selected

Having refined our sample, we then needed to decide how to approach the visual analysis of these web images. It is of course possible to use a wide range of methods depending in part on the type of image that is the focus of analysis. Indeed, depending on the broader focus of research it may be that a decision is made to approach the analysis from a perspective in which the image is considered in conjunction with other web elements. As already mentioned this might involve adopting multimodal analysis (Caple & Knox, 2015; Kress, 2010) or some forms of discourse analysis. For example, Bailey et al. (2009) offer an explanation of using critical discourse analysis as an approach to looking at images and text, although here in

a printed form. Our own analysis employed different perspectives of visual analysis which were selected based on an extensive review of the literature and on trying out different approaches with our sample to assess the different insights generated. This reflects Hook and Glaveanu's (2013) suggestions that visual analysts often apply a variety of approaches to generate different perspectives on an image. The three analytic frames applied were:

- Davison's (2010, p. 165) framework which particularly emphasizes paying attention to 'visual portraiture codes'. This fitted the portrait-character of our stock photos and is also widely used within the business and management literature.
- Rose's (2012) areas of investigation of the image: technological, compositional and social modalities particularly because of the applicability of her 'sites' of investigation to web images.
- Machin's (2004) developments of Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotic approach (1996; van Leeuwen, 2005) as this specifically focuses on the generic and abstract potential of stock images.

In addition to these visual analytic approaches our analysis also considered the relationships between a stock photo and its surrounding web setting, in particular the headlines and photo-captions which establish the links between the image and text, offering a suggested framing for each. In terms of carrying out the analysis, we first divided the 16 images between us. We then each used the above ideas to guide our interpretation and produced a (textual) analytic account. These accounts were then passed to the other author who added, annotated and questioned the account to add further interpretative depth, again using the concepts above as analytic prompts. An initial analytic account was written up and presented at a conference (Pritchard & Whiting, 2012b).

Stage 3: Photo-Elicitation Exercise

It would have been possible to conclude our analysis at this point. However, when we presented our conference paper, discussions and

questions from participants highlighted the potential of incorporating others' reactions to these images to develop our contribution. Parker has commented on the use of this approach to 'elicit individual and social constructions of different parties involved in the framing, content and/or viewing of photographs' (2009, p. 1115). Therefore, we subsequently undertook group photo-elicitation to gather others' views and to explore what Rose (2012) has called the site of 'audienicing'. This reflects our broader research concern with the ways in which understandings of age and ageing at work are constructed via web media, understandings that in turn shape and are shaped by day to day organizational life. For this particular stage of our research we further refined our sample and selected three images, choosing those that depicted a range of ages and genders in poses that depicted their relationship to employment (see Pritchard & Whiting, 2015). Our selection was therefore purposive, but selecting a small number of images is typical for photo-elicitation so that participants can have sufficient time to review and respond to each image (Feighery, 2009; Meyer et al., 2013). At this point we also decided to purchase the rights for the use of these images in research and publication. This also gave us access to high quality images which were of further benefit to our own analysis and enabled us to provide clearer images to our participants. There is much debate about the extent to which researchers can rely on the fair dealing provision under copyright laws in respect of images reproduced for the purpose of research. However, at the time we took the decision we had access to a limited amount of funding and decided that the benefit of high quality images was worth the cost involved.² We decided on a group rather than the more common one-to-one photo-elicitation interview (Kelan, 2012; Parker, 2009) as we had an opportunity to present the images during several forthcoming workshops. Overall 39 participants who self-identified as working in human resources or occupational psychology participated in the photo-elicitation stage.

A key challenge was the extent to which we might be able to recreate in these workshops a sense for the participants of how we ourselves encountered the images on the web. Based on a consideration of the practical implications, we decided to adopt the approach of both displaying the (colour) images on a large screen and providing a (black and white) printed copy to participants. In both formats, participants were shown both the high-resolution image on its own and a copy of the downloaded image in its original web context (via screen capture). We decided to show this so that participants could get a sense of the surrounding web context including the accompanying news headlines. However, because of display limitations they could not read the detailed text of the accompanying news story. In each workshop, the paper copy provided to participants detailed their ethical rights and included an open response box under each image for them to complete individually. As the images were displayed, participants were asked simply 'what are your impressions of these photos' and to write their thoughts on the paper provided. We did not provide any additional guidelines as to what elements to focus on or how to structure their response, so that participants were able to consider the photograph from whatever perspective they wished. In most cases this led to participants considering the scene that was depicted (for example a team meeting) and the role of different characters; some wrote notes while others constructed more elaborate stories about the scene (see analysis and images presented in Pritchard & Whiting, 2015 for examples). Participants could chat to others in the room and ask questions. We subsequently shared our own analysis of each image and discussed similarities and differences with the participants, though these discussions were not recorded. However, it is important to reflect that such discussions (here and indeed elsewhere as we discussed our research with colleagues) fed into further iterations of our own analysis.

Stage 4: Drawing Together Analytic Insights

Given the free format approach adopted during the photo-elicitation, we applied thematic analysis (King, 1998) to explore the participant data collected. Once we had analysed these data separately we then used the themes generated and mapped them onto those from our own initial analysis, noting where they compared or contrasted. This provided a further reflexive prompt for our own analytic review of the images. Our full analysis of the images and participants' comments and the contribution to academic knowledge have been published elsewhere (Pritchard & Whiting, 2015). Methodologically we learned a great deal during this exercise. For us a key benefit of including participants' views of the images was the variety and richness of interpretations that this generated, sometimes challenging our own analysis or offering alternative ways of seeing. Combining this with our own analysis gave a sound base from which to draw conclusions. However, during this process we inevitably focused on few images. Moreover, a further challenge was the rather limited way in which we were able to present the images to participants as removed from their web context. It would be useful to explore ways in which mobile devices could be used in future, perhaps even via providing links to websites for participants to explore from their own devices. Of course, it would also be possible to broaden a study beyond the web image itself and discuss with participants their response to other elements of the web interface, moving to a multi-modal approach. Elsewhere we have found that this presents new challenges in managing the range and types of data while maintaining focus on a particular research problem (Whiting & Pritchard, 2015).

CONCLUSION

It has been suggested that across all disciplines researchers 'struggle to keep up'

(Tonks et al., 2015, p. 326) with technological developments that might enable or restrict the scope and practice of our undertakings. Web images offer an exciting and challenging opportunity for business and management research. It is important that we discuss and debate the methodological challenges such research entails, but we should not be afraid to experiment and apply the lessons learned by researchers in other fields.

A particular area we are keen to explore is the circulation of web images (and indeed web texts). Hare et al. (2014) suggest that rather than seeing data on the internet as 'there' for collection, rather we should think of it as dipping into a constant stream of changing images, texts, sounds, etc. This has significant implications for research practice. First, it impacts the way in which we understand the temporal aspects of research; highlighting the potential for shortitudinal (Sniehotta, 2009) as well as more traditional longitudinal approaches. Second, it highlights the need for flexible and engaged research processes that might enable us to, for example, follow images across the web rather than simply extracting them at one point in time.

A further challenge for qualitative researchers is the way in which notions of big data are becoming increasingly synonymous with internet research (Dutton, 2013). On the one hand, this highlights the prominence of quantitative methods within internet research. These can produce topographical maps of internet phenomenon, illuminating the overall shape and form of the issues under consideration (Murthy, 2008). Yet such representations also set the scene and create interest in more in-depth understandings of human/digital interactions as we navigate these maps, examining experiences shaped through and by the internet. Qualitative approaches, including the visual analysis of web images, have much to offer in here. However, we have much more methodological work to do to secure a voice for such 'small data' qualitative approaches in a rapidly evolving 'big data' world.

Notes

- 1 Whereas handheld devices are discrete objects, in wearable technology the device is integrated within an item of clothing or accessory such as a watch or pair of glasses (Tehrani & Michael, 2014).
- 2 In this case, based on the purchase of rights to use the image in a single journal article and associated educational use associated with the research, we paid £40 per image. However, when requesting one of the same images for use within this chapter, Sage were quoted £130, which was deemed too expensive. Therefore, researchers need to bear in mind that costs will vary depending on the stock photograph itself, the agency involved and the proposed use of the image.

REFERENCES

- Acevedo, B. and Warren, S. (2012) 'Vision in organization studies', *Culture and Organization*, 18(4): 277–84.
- Acker, J. (2012) 'Gendered organizations and intersectionality: Problems and possibilities', *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 31(3): 214–24.
- Adami, E. (2015) 'What's in a click? A social semiotic framework for the multimodal analysis of website interactivity', *Visual Communication*, 14(2): 133–53.
- Åsberg, C. and Lum, J. (2010) 'Picturizing the scattered ontologies of Alzheimer's disease: Towards a materialist feminist approach to visual technoscience studies', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 17(4): 323–45.
- Baetens, J. (2013) 'Image and visual culture after the pictorial turn: An outsider's note', *Visual Studies*, 28(2): 180–85.
- Bailey, J., Townsend, K. and Luck, E. (2009) 'WorkChoices, ImageChoices and the marketing of new industrial relations legislation', *Work Employment and Society*, 23(2): 285–304.
- Bamberg, J. (2010) 'Ambiguities in knowledge production: Multimodal analysis of discourse and dramaturgy in public participation GIS experiments', *Environment and Planning B: Planning & Design*, 37(5): 895–910.
- Barthes, R. (1977) *Image, Music, Text*. London: Flamingo.
- Barthes, R. (1981) *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. London: Cape.
- BBC (2015) 'Photographer "lost £10,000 in Wikipedia monkey 'selfie' row"', BBC, 7 August 2015, [online], retrieved from: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-gloucestershire-28674167. Last accessed 2 October 2015.
- BBC (2016) 'Tata Steel to look at potential bids for Port Talbot', BBC, 4 May 2016, [online], retrieved from: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-36199267. Last accessed 6 May 2016.
- Bell, E. and Davison, J. (2013) 'Visual management studies: Empirical and theoretical approaches', *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15(2): 167–84.
- Bell, E., Warren, S. and Schroeder, J. (2014) 'The visual organization', in E. Bell, S. Warren and J. Schroeder (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Visual Organization*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge, pp. 1–16.
- Brown, V.R. and Vaughn, E.D. (2011) 'The writing on the (Facebook) wall: The use of social networking sites in hiring decisions', *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 26(2): 219–25.
- Caple, H. (2006) 'Multisemiotic communication in an Australian broadsheet: A new news story genre', in C. Bazerman, A. Bonini and D. Figueiredo (eds.) *Genre in A Changing World: Perspectives on Writing*. Fort Collins, CO: The WAC Clearinghouse and Parlor Press, pp. 243–54.
- Caple, H. and Knox, J.S. (2012) 'Online news galleries, photojournalism and the photo essay', *Visual Communication*, 11(2): 207–36.
- Caple, H., and Knox, J.S. (2015) 'A framework for the multimodal analysis of online news galleries: What makes a "good" picture gallery?' *Social Semiotics*, 25(3), 292–321.
- Chouliaraki, L. (2015) 'Digital witnessing in war journalism: The case of post-Arab Spring conflicts', *Popular Communication: The International Journal of Media and Culture*, 13(2): 105–19.
- Coover, R. (2011) 'Interactive media representation', in E. Margolis and L. Pauwels (eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Visual Research Methods*. London: Sage, pp. 617–38.
- Coupland, C. (2005) 'Corporate social responsibility as argument on the web', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 62(4): 355–66.
- Davison, J. (2010) '[In]visible [in]tangibles: Visual portraits of the business élite', *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 35(2): 165–83.

- Davison, J., Mclean, C. and Warren, S. (2012) 'Exploring the visual in organizations and management', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 7(1): 5–15.
- Delmestri, G., Oberg, A. and Drori, G.S. (2015) 'The unbearable lightness of university branding: Cross-national patterns', *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 45(2): 121–36.
- Dutton, W.H. (2013) 'The social shaping of digital research', *International Journal of Social Research Methods*, 16(2): 177–95.
- Elliott, C. and Robinson, S. (2014) 'Towards an understanding of corporate web identity', in E. Bell, S. Warren and J. Schroeder (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Visual Organization*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge, pp. 278–88.
- Emmison, M., Smith, P. and Mayall, M. (2012) 'Virtual visual data', in *Introducing Qualitative Methods: Researching the Visual (2nd Edition)*. London: Sage, pp. 216–50.
- Fairclough, N. (1995) *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Longman.
- Feighery, W. (2009) 'Tourism, stock photography and surveillance: A Foucauldian interpretation', *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 7(3): 161–78.
- Fink, J. and Lomax, H. (2014) 'Challenging images? Dominant, residual and emergent meanings in on-line media representations of child poverty', *Journal for the Study of British Cultures*, 21(1): 79–95.
- Fleischer, H. (2011) 'Towards a phenomenological understanding of Web 2.0 and knowledge formation', *Education Inquiry*, 2(3): 535–49.
- Frosh, P. (2001) 'Inside the image factory: Stock photography and cultural production', *Media, Culture & Society*, 23(5): 625–46.
- Frosh, P. (2002) 'Rhetorics of the overlooked: On the communicative modes of stock advertising images', *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 2(2): 171–96.
- Hare, J., Dupplaw, D., Lewis, P., Hall, W. and Martinez, K. (2014) 'Exploiting multimedia in creating and analysing multimedia web archives', *Future Internet*, 6(2): 242–60.
- Hodgkin, E. (2016) 'The 1990s websites that companies wish they could forget! Old web pages for McDonald's, Pepsi and Apple show just how far technology has come', *The Daily Mail* 18 April 2016 [online], retrieved from: www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-3544220/The-1990s-websites-companies-wish-forget.html. Last accessed: 18 April 2016.
- Hook, D., and Glaveanu, V. P. (2013) 'Image analysis: An interactive approach to compositional elements', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 10(4): 255–368.
- Jackson, S., Vares, T. and Gill, R. (2012) 'The whole playboy mansion image: Girls' fashioning and fashioned selves within a post-feminist culture', *Feminism & Psychology*, 23(2): 143–62.
- Kelan, E.K. (2012) 'The becoming of business bodies: Gender, appearance, and leadership development', *Management Learning*, 44(1): 45–61.
- Kelsey, C. (2016) 'Port Talbot management buyout group appoint banker to board as non-exec', *Wales Online*, 1 May 2016, [online], retrieved from: www.walesonline.co.uk/business/business-news/port-talbot-management-buyout-group-11268471. Last accessed: 6 May 2016.
- Kiesler, S. (2014). *Culture of the Internet*. New York: Psychology Press.
- King, N. (1998) 'Template analysis', in G. Symon and C. Cassell (eds.) *Qualitative Methods and Analysis in Organizational Research*. London: Sage, pp. 118–34.
- Koliska, M. and Roberts, J. (2015) 'Selfies: Witnessing and participatory journalism with a point of view', *International Journal of Communication*, 9(14): 1672–85.
- Kress, G. (2010) *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*. London: Routledge.
- Kress, G. and van Leeuwen, T. (1996) *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge.
- Loader, B.D. and Dutton, W.H. (2012) 'A decade in internet time', *Information, Communication & Society*, 15(5): 609–15.
- Machin, D. (2004) 'Building the world's visual language: The increasing global importance of image banks in corporate media', *Visual Communication*, 3(3): 316–36.
- Machin, D. and van Leeuwen, T. (2007) *Global Media Discourse: A Critical Introduction*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Madera, J.M. (2012) 'Using social networking websites as a selection tool: The role of

- selection process fairness and job pursuit intentions', *International Journal of Hospital-ity Management*, 31(4): 1276–82.
- Maguire, S. and Hardy, C. (2009) 'Discourse and deinstitutionalization: The decline of DDT', *Academy of Management Journal*, 52(1): 148–78.
- Margolis, E. and Pauwels, L. (eds.) (2011) *The SAGE Handbook of Visual Research Methods*. London: Sage.
- Markham, A. (2008) 'Internet in qualitative research', in L.M. Given (ed.) *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 455–59.
- Meriläinen, S., Tienari, J., Katila, S. and Benschop, Y. (2009) 'Diversity management versus gender equality: The Finnish case', *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences-Revue Canadienne des Sciences de L'Administration*, 26(3): 230–43.
- Mescher, S., Benschop, Y. and Doorewaard, H. (2010) 'Representations of work–life balance support', *Human Relations*, 63(1): 21–39.
- Meyer, R., Höllerer, M., Jancsary, D. and van Leeuwen, T. (2013) 'The visual dimension in organizing, organization, and organization research: Core ideas, current developments, and promising avenues', *The Academy of Management Annals*, 7(1): 489–555.
- Milestone, K. and Meyer, A. (2012) *Gender & Popular Culture*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Muralidharan, S., Dillistone, K. and Shin, J.-H. (2011) 'The Gulf Coast oil spill: Extending the theory of image restoration discourse to the realm of social media and beyond petroleum', *Public Relations Review*, 37(3): 226–32.
- Murthy, D. (2008) 'Digital ethnography: An examination of the use of new technologies for social research', *Sociology*, 42(5): 837–55.
- Orlikowski, W.J. and Scott, S.V. (2013) 'What happens when evaluation goes online? Exploring apparatuses of valuation in the travel sector', *Organization Science*, 25(3): 868–91.
- Parker, L.D. (2009) 'Photo-elicitation: An ethno-historical accounting and management research prospect', *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 22(7): 1111–29.
- Pauwels, L. (2011) 'Researching websites as social and cultural expressions', in E. Margolis and L. Pauwels (eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Visual Research Methods*. London: Sage, pp. 570–90.
- Pritchard, K. and Whiting, R. (2012a) 'Autopilot? A reflexive review of the piloting process in qualitative e-research', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 7(3): 338–53.
- Pritchard, K. and Whiting, R. (2012b) *Gender and Generations*. Presented at Gendered Ageing at Work: Beyond the 'Double Jeopardy'; Gender, Work & Organization, 7th interdisciplinary conference, June 2012 (Keele University, UK).
- Pritchard, K. and Whiting, R. (2014) 'Baby Boomers and the lost generation: On the discursive construction of generations at work', *Organization Studies*, 35(11): 1605–26.
- Pritchard, K. and Whiting, R. (2015) 'Taking stock: A visual analysis of gendered ageing', *Gender, Work & Organization*, 22(5): 510–28.
- Rämö, H. (2011) 'Visualizing the phronetic organization: The case of photographs in CSR reports', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 104(3): 371–87.
- Rawlinson, K. and Perraudin, F. (2015) 'DWP admits inventing quotes from fake "benefits claimants" for sanctions leaflet', *The Guardian*, 18 August 2015, [online], retrieved from: www.theguardian.com/society/2015/aug/18/dwp-admits-making-up-positive-quotes-from-benefits-claimants-for-leaflet. Last accessed 2 October 2015.
- Rose, G. (2012) *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*. London: Sage.
- Rose, G. (2015) 'The production, composition, audiencing – and circulation – of images', *Visual/ Method/ Culture*, 5 February 2015 [online], retrieved from: <https://visualmethod-culture.wordpress.com/2015/02/05/the-production-composition-audiencing-and-circulation-of-images/>. Last accessed 8 June 2015.
- Schroeder, J.E. (2007) 'Critical visual analysis', in R.W. Belk (ed.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Marketing*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, pp. 303–21.
- Shortt, H. and Warren, S. (2012) 'Fringe benefits: Valuing the visual in narratives of hair-dressers' identities at work', *Visual Studies*, 27(1): 18–34.
- Singh, V. and Point, S. (2006) '(Re)presentations of gender and ethnicity in diversity statements on European company websites', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 68(4): 363–79.

- Sniehotta, F. (2009) 'An experimental test of the theory of planned behavior', *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*, 1(2): 257–70.
- Sproull, L., Dutton, W. and Kiesler, S. (2007) 'Introduction to the special issue: Online communities', *Organization Studies*, 28(3): 277–81.
- Tehrani, K and Michael, A. (2014) 'Wearable technology and wearable devices: Everything you need to know', *Wearable Devices Magazine* March 2014, [online], retrieved from www.wearabledevices.com/what-is-a-wearable-device/. Last accessed 19 April 2016.
- Tomchak, A-M. and Wilmer, H. (2015) 'Virginia shooting: How thousands watched murder video by mistake', BBC, 27 August 2015, [online], retrieved from: www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-34074189. Last accessed 2 October 2015.
- Tonks, A., Lyons, A.C. and Goodwin, I. (2015) 'Researching online visual displays on social networking sites: Methodologies and meanings', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 12(3): 326–39.
- van Dijck, J. (2008) 'Digital photography: Communication, identity, memory', *Visual Communication*, 7(1): 57–76.
- van Leeuwen, T. (2005) *Introducing Social Semiotics*. London: Routledge.
- Ward, C.G. (2007) 'Stock images, filler content and the ambiguous corporate message', *Media Culture Journal*, 10(5) (*Electronic Journal*) [online], retrieved from: www.journal.media-culture.org.au/0710/04-ward.php. Last accessed 3 July 2012.
- Waters, R.D. and Jamal, J.Y. (2011) 'Tweet, tweet, tweet: A content analysis of nonprofit organizations' Twitter updates', *Public Relations Review*, 37(3): 321–24.
- White, J. (2016) 'The reality of working life at Tata Steel's plant in Port Talbot', *South Wales Evening Post*, 5 May 2016, [online], retrieved from: www.southwales-eveningpost.co.uk/reality-working-life-Tata-Steel-s-plant-Port/story-29232941-detail/story.html. Last accessed: 6 May 2016.
- Whiting, R. and Pritchard, K. (2015) 'Weary Women? Re-Constructing Retirement in the 21st Century', paper presented at EGOS 2015, Athens, Greece.

Making Meaning from Multimodality: Embodied Communication in a Business Pitch Setting

Rowena Viney, Jean Clarke and Joep Cornelissen

INTRODUCTION

A multimodal research agenda is gaining traction in organisational research; multimodality is the theory and understanding that multiple modes of communication outside of speech and text have the potential to convey meaning (Iedema, 2007; Jones & LeBaron, 2002; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Streeck et al., 2011). There is an increasing realisation that the visual, material and embodied modes of meaning-making pervade organisations and understanding these non-verbal modes of meaning creation could provide opportunities for new and interesting theoretical, empirical and methodological insights (Bell & Davison, 2013; Jancsary et al., 2015). Multimodality emphasises that ‘language’ is just one of many resources for making meaning and that:

all such resources available in one social group and its cultures at a particular moment ought to be considered as constituting one coherent domain,

an integral field of nevertheless distinct resources for *making* meaning; all equal, potentially, in their capacity to contribute meaning to a complex semiotic entity, a text or text-like entity. (Kress, 2011, p. 242).

Within a multimodal perspective speech and text are not necessarily seen as the dominant mode of communication and are ideally not examined in isolation but as one mode of communication among many others (visual, spoken, gestural, written, three-dimensional, etc.) that also potentially interact and align to generate meaning (Philips et al., 2004).

Despite this increasing interest in multimodality and its relationships to organisations and management, there remains a lack of work which empirically investigates multimodality in the context of organisations. This may be due to the significant challenges presented to researchers interested in investigating multimodality, namely the lack of multimodal ‘literacy’ among organisational researchers (Jancsary et al., 2015). We remain unskilled in terms of ‘reading’, understanding

and analysing multimodal data. In particular, it is often necessary to transform multimodal data into easily accessible, text-based material so that it can be coded and reported on, which often leads to a loss of some of its original multimodal richness (Plowman & Stephen, 2008). It is often not fully possible to articulate through language a complete sense of the bodily and interactional richness and complexity of multimodal data and all that we find interesting about this data. Without proper multimodal analytical protocols these preverbal, visceral hunches can often ‘remain at the level of vague suspicion and intuitive response’ (Iedema, 2001, p. 201). There is, in other words, a need to develop the multimodal ‘literacy’ of researchers to ensure that multimodal data is represented and analysed in such a way that their contextual richness is being maintained whilst at the same time allowing for systematic analyses and theory development.

Our aim in this chapter is to give an empirical example of how multimodality can be examined in the context of entrepreneurship. Within the domain of entrepreneurship, an emerging line of inquiry focuses on how through both verbal and non-verbal communication and behavioural displays entrepreneurs may be able to convince investors to provide resources and investment (Baron & Markman, 2003; Chen et al., 2009; Clarke, 2011; Cornelissen & Clarke, 2010). In this chapter we focus specifically on entrepreneurs’ use of gesture when pitching for investment at organised pitch events. We focus on gesture as an element of multimodal meaning-making which forms a central mode of human communication alongside speech. As Kendon (1983, p. 27) for example suggests, ‘*gesticulation arises as an integral part of an individual’s communicative effort and ... has a direct role to play in this process*’ (italics in the original). Gesticulations (spontaneous movements of hands and arms that co-occur with speech), are one type of body movement that are thought to play an integral role

in the process of communication (Alibali et al., 2001). Gestures convey information complementary to speech as the mimetic and analogue format of gestures (in the form of shapes, sizes, spatial relationships) can lead to different representations of ideas compared to the more discrete and categorical format underlying grammar and speech (cf. Cornelissen et al., 2012). Thus, when gestures accompany speech, they may enable speakers to express thoughts that may otherwise not easily fit into the categorical system that their language offers (Goldin-Meadow & McNeill, 1999).

In demonstrating one way of examining multimodality in an entrepreneurship context, this chapter considers the utility of paying attention to non-verbal data by unpacking some of the embodied practices of competent entrepreneurs. The remainder of the chapter is structured as follows. We first introduce the setting of entrepreneurship. We then describe the role of gesture as part of multimodal analysis. We then discuss specific empirical work that features in our analysis. We conclude the chapter by discussing the insights afforded by gesture analysis and the contributions that this type of multimodal analysis makes to our understanding of entrepreneurship and more widely organisational and management research. We argue that directing attention to multimodal meaning-making complements and extends research that focuses on language alone and that the potential contribution of multimodal research in organisation and management research is substantial.

THE MULTIMODAL MEANING-MAKING OF ENTREPRENEURS

The acquisition of resources and capital is a critical step for many entrepreneurs, which triggers the question: How do entrepreneurs persuade potential investors to support their venture? Entrepreneurs, generally speaking,

face significant problems in convincing investors of their ventures due to the 'liability of newness' (Stinchcombe, 1965) associated with their ideas, with often little in the way of a track record, obvious asset value or profitability in sight (Brush et al., 2001; Cassar, 2004; Mason & Harrison, 2000). In this context, how entrepreneurs communicate about their ventures may be crucial to secure investment that allows them to further develop their ventures and potentially bring the business to a stable level of growth (Bird & Schjoedt, 2009). Investment pitching events offer an opportunity for entrepreneurs to communicate their ideas and are generally seen as critical in that a successful 'performance' is essential in order to gain support and resources from investors (Cornelissen & Clarke, 2010).

There have been increasing suggestions in the recent entrepreneurship literature that the non-verbal devices used by entrepreneurs are very important for entrepreneurial performances. Clarke (2011) demonstrates the importance of visual symbols (setting, props, dress and emotional expressiveness), illustrating how entrepreneurs use a range of visual symbols during interactions with stakeholders in order to increase low levels of legitimacy. Baron and Markman (2003) highlight the importance of what they refer to as 'social competence' in engaging others in the entrepreneurial venture. The idea of social competence goes beyond ideas of persuasion through linguistic domains, as it 'encompass[es] the ability to correctly gauge the current moods or emotions of others, proficiency in inducing positive reactions in others by enhancing one's own appearance and image effectiveness in persuasion' (Vecchio, 2003, p. 318). Mason and Harrison (2000) similarly found that if entrepreneurs did not 'sell' or persuade Business Angels of the utility of their product through effective use of language, display and artefacts, they were unlikely to secure the investment. Chen et al. (2009) also examined the importance of entrepreneurs expressing passion during

interactions with investors, potential employees and major customers. They define passion as energetic body movements, rich body language and animated facial expression.

Building on this stream of research, we aim to examine the role embodied communication plays in the context of entrepreneurship. In multimodal communication the underlying assumption is that multiple modes of meaning-making (gestures, gaze, bodily position, facial expressions) are used outside and alongside language in interpersonal communication (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Drawing on this perspective, we start from the position that when communicating individuals naturally move their bodies when they speak and these movements are not accidental, but are often tightly coupled to the communicative messages speakers wish to convey (Kaschak et al., 2005). As Goodwin (1981, p. 125) noted, 'emergent displays ... integrate the bodies of the participants into the production of talk, and are important constitutive features of the conversation'. Listeners take notice of these movements and infer different things about speakers and their messages as a result of what they see (Clark, 1996; Glenberg & Kaschak, 2002).

The development of understanding between individuals is then fundamentally connected with the actions that their bodies perform (Richardson et al., 2003; Semin & Cacioppo, 2008). The literature suggests that hand gestures (naturally occurring gesticulations that tend to co-occur with speech), are centrally involved in language processing and communication as they convey substantive information (Goldin-Meadow, 1999; Leander, 2002; Loring et al., 2000). Gestures complement speech, as the mimetic and analogue format of gestures (in the form of shapes, sizes, spatial relationships) may lead to different representations of ideas compared to the more discrete and categorical format underlying grammar and speech (cf. Cornelissen et al., 2012). Thus, when gestures accompany speech, they may enable speakers to express thoughts that may otherwise not

easily fit into the categorical system that their language offers (Goldin-Meadow & McNeill, 1999) and allow listeners to infer speaker intentions and to form understanding.

Whilst there has been little work examining the importance of gesture in organisational contexts, in other domains the importance of gesture in terms of aiding communication has been well established. For example, in the context of politics, studies of politicians demonstrate that they use gestures frequently and in strategic and pragmatic ways to persuade listeners of a point that they are trying to make (Kendon, 2004; Streeck, 2008). Argentin et al. (1990), for example, asked university students to assess the persuasiveness of a politician depending on whether he delivered the same message with (or without) hand gestures. The politician was perceived as more persuasive when he used many ideational or metaphoric gestures and a reasonable amount of speech marking or rhythmic gestures. More recently, Maricchiolo et al. (2009) established in an experiment with students that a speaker trying to persuade students of the proposal to increase university fees was judged as generally more competent, composed and effective in her communication style when she used gestures (as opposed to no gestures) and ideational gestures in particular. Building on the importance that gesture-related information has been shown to have in these disparate contexts, we examine the role gesture plays in communication in the context of entrepreneurship. Below we describe our research context and data in more detail.

COLLECTING MULTIMODAL DATA

In order to examine the multimodality in the context of entrepreneurship we employed a video-based method that allowed us to gather both linguistic and non-verbal communication. Video recording is one of the primary media that allow researchers to capture such

multimodality in action. Through video, researchers can for example track facial expressions and gestures, the bodily use of artefacts, or how individual actors interact with their environment, making it an ideal method for a range of research objectives related to multimodal understanding. As Kress (2011, p. 253) argues ‘the use of the video-recorder brought with it a vivid realization of the limits of speech as either a sufficient or a central “means of record” of meaning made’. Video-analysis allows us to examine ‘starkly visible “extra-linguistic” features’ and opens up new possibilities for researchers by facilitating ‘multimodal’ analysis through the repeated scrutiny and frame by frame examination of the same motion/speech event in micro-level detail (Luff & Heath, 2012). We video-recorded 54 pitches of varying length that took place at Business Angel pitching events around the UK in 2013 and 2014. Following Collier and Collier’s (1986, p. 149) advice that ‘good video and film records for research are ultimately the product of observation that is organized and consistent’, we explored a range of issues prior to capturing the videotaped data including the optimum distance for researchers to videotape participants and the type of camera angle and view which is least distracting to participants (e.g. Collier & Collier, 1986; Prosser, 1998). These types of pitching events are routinely video-recorded so the entrepreneurs involved were quite used to the experience.

The videos were transcribed using a variant of transcription conventions developed by Jefferson (2004). These conventions capture the details of how talk is produced, for example stress, lengthened sounds, silences and audible in- and out-breaths (please see the Appendix for the transcription key). This transcription system is designed not only to capture *what* was said, but also the *way* in which it was said, which is important in this case given the focus on persuasion. The analytic approach to the data was informed by conversation analysis, a method that looks at

the minute detail of naturally occurring interactions to describe the structures of social interaction (Stivers & Sidnell, 2013). A key principle of conversation analysis is that when we talk we do particular actions, and there is a wealth of research on how certain types of action are accomplished by speakers, for example complaining (Drew & Holt, 1988), assessing (Pomerantz, 1984) and requesting (Curl & Drew, 2008); non-verbal means of communication are also incorporated into analysis, for example gaze (Goodwin, 1981), hand movements (Schegloff, 1984), and laughter (Jefferson et al., 1987). A second principle is that speakers orient their talk or actions to the rules and structures by which interaction is organised; certain types of action relate to particular other types and in particular ways, for example an offer will be followed by an acceptance or a rejection, and always in this order – ordinarily a rejection would not come before the offer (see Schegloff (2007) for an in-depth look at how interaction is organised). A further principle holds that through talk we maintain intersubjectivity, which means that as analysts we can see how utterances are interpreted by speakers by looking at how they are treated by the speakers themselves; such detail as silences or corrections of something in the talk (technically described as *repair* in the conversation analysis literature) can convey to both interactants and the analyst how an utterance has been understood (see Peräkylä (2004) for more on the principles of conversation analysis). The analysis below draws on these principles and the detailed interactional findings reported in the field of conversational analysis.

For the coding of the gestures, we drew on an established protocol from cognitive science (as in Cienki, 2005, adapted from Müller, 1998). The focus was on individual gesture strokes, the phase of gestural movement which displays the most distinct exertion of effort (as opposed to the preparation leading up to it or the retraction of the hand after it) (Kendon, 1980, 2004). The stroke

phase also provides the most information for determining a gesture's likely primary function (its 'meaning') (McNeill, 1992, pp. 375–6). First the shape, motion, placement and orientation of the entrepreneur's hands in each gesture was transcribed, without sound to ensure the initial gesture coding was not influenced by the speech. Following this initial coding, this initial annotation was revisited whilst listening to the speech, which allowed us to sharpen our interpretations and highlight instances where speech and gesture synchronise and align. The gestures were then categorised into *ideational* gestures which depict semantic information or *beat* gestures which mark points of emphasis in speech but 'do not present a discernible meaning' (McNeill, 1992, p. 80). Ideational gestures were further subdivided into gestures which refer to a physical, concrete referent based on the content of the speech or gestures which are used in an ideational *metaphoric* way to refer to an abstract notion in terms of a physical form or movement (Cienki, 1998; Kendon, 2004).

Unlike other types of interaction such as everyday conversations or interviews, business pitches generally do not allow for audience members to respond for the duration of the pitch, meaning that as analysts we do not have access to individual audience members' interpretations of and reactions to the talk and gesture being produced. However, business pitches, like presentations in general, are still produced for an audience and are therefore interactive. For example, Rendle-Short's (2006) analysis of academic presentations, during which audience members are usually silent and still, shows that speakers use their talk and their physical actions such as gaze and gesture to show engagement with their audience. This approach may be viewed as somewhat positivist, as the audience members' responses are not there to guide the analysis. Moreover, as conversation analysts systematically observe people's interactional behaviour in naturally occurring situations in an attempt to understand social organisation,

this could also be viewed as tending towards positivism (Peräkylä, 2004); however, the robust manner of examining interactional data and the comprehensive set of findings about interaction documented so far ensure that analysts do not simply impose their own interpretations onto the data.

A variety of interesting phenomena were observed in the recordings made of the pitches, one of which was the use of contrasts by entrepreneurs both verbally and in their gestures. Stills from the video recording are provided in the section below to show the arm and hand gestures used in the pitches, with descriptions of the speakers' movements included by each set of images. Key parts of the talk in relation to this analysis are shown in bold.

MULTIMODALITY AND ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNICATION

In all of the pitches in the data set the presenters describe an existing problem that their product or service will solve. They might not explicitly use the terms 'problem' and 'solution' or 'solve', but the implication that their product or service will solve a particular problem in their particular industry is still made at some point in their pitch. This tends to be set up as a contrast,

with a description of the problem being followed by the entrepreneur's solution. There can be several of these problem–solution contrasts within one pitch, which the entrepreneur can use to illustrate the various advantages of their product or service in relation to various aspects of the overarching problem. Contrasts and puzzle–solution pairs were identified as rhetorical devices used in political speeches by Heritage and Greatbatch (1986), which can be used to generate responsive applause from the audience. In the context of business pitches applause only comes at the end of the pitch, but the use of these rhetorical devices can still serve to gain the interest of the audience and to convince them of the point that the entrepreneurs are making.

The examples below illustrate the use of contrasts by entrepreneurs when trying to persuade potential investors to support their ventures. They present these problem–solution contrasts both verbally and physically, in order to make the concept they describe as understandable as possible (see also Appendix 1).

Example 1

In this extract the speaker describes a common misconception about paying for telephone calls, followed by how his product provides a solution to this apparent problem:

Event 6 – Pitch 2

- 01 E: .hh Lots of people say I don't pay for my ca:lls, (0.2) well
 02 -> you do. =You just actually **bundle them all up** so you still
 03 actually pay for your calls.
 04 (0.7)
 05 So: (0.2) ↑however it's dressed up you still pay for them (.)
 06 -> whereas what we can provi::de (.) is you u:se just a **thi:ny bit**
 07 -> **of your data °package°** (0.4) and all your calls are fre. And
 08 it doesn't matter where you are in the world.



Hands reach open point on 'bundle' and move together, ending movement on 'up'

Figure 18.1 Metaphorical gesture on 'bundle'

Right hand held with fingertips together, does series of beats beginning on 'tiny' and increasing in speed until ending after 'package'



Figure 18.2 Metaphorical gesture on 'tiny'

The entrepreneur begins with the statement 'Lots of people say I don't pay for my ca:lls', but then switches from the descriptor 'lots of people' to the generic pronoun 'you', with 'well you do:', thus aggregating the group that says that they do not pay for their calls with people in general, which also includes his audience (Lerner & Kitzinger, 2007). Shifting to this reference form means that the problem he describes is now not limited to people working in his industry but to people in general, the audience members included. He then describes how it is that people do actually pay for their calls: 'You just actually bundle them all up so you still actually pay for your calls'. The term 'bundle' is used by some mobile network providers as part of the deals they advertise, so it might be recognised by the audience as an industry-related term. However, the actual meaning – to gather closely together (e.g. a bundle of hay) – suggests something more physical. As phone calls cannot be physically manipulated or bundled, this use of the word bundle is metaphoric. The presenter's gesture at this point also highlights the physical nature of the term bundle, as he acts out 'bundling up' with his hands. The speaker's hands start held out to either side of his body on 'bundle'; the speaker brings them towards each other, reaching the peak position on 'up' where his hands are now in front of his body. At no point do his hands touch – at the peak of his gesture his hands are still held apart. However, throughout the movement his palms are facing each other and his hands are slightly curled inwards, which adds to the notion of 'bundling' things together. As his hands are still kept apart the impression

given is of a largish 'bundle' being depicted; this seems to be reflected in his talk with 'them all' being 'bundled up'. He completes his turn with the upshot of bundling calls in this way – 'you still actually pay for your calls', with the two occurrences of 'actually' serving to contrast with the initial reported assertion that people don't think that they pay for their calls.

After a 0.7 second silence the presenter reformulates this upshot as '↑however it's dressed up you still pay for them', with a further use of metaphoric language with 'dressed up'. However, as he continues his talk some more metaphoric gesture can be seen. This part of his talk is immediately set up as a contrast from the content of his just prior talk, as he begins with 'whereas'. He then frames what is to come as an advantage of his company's service: 'what we can provi::de', with stress on 'we', provides the added implication of the advantage being specific to his company and not any competitor. In his description of what his business provides he explains (still using the pronoun 'you', in contrast to the 'we' of his company) that 'you u:se just a ^{thi}:ny bit of your data °package° (0.4) and all your calls are free'. On '^{thi}:ny' the presenter raises his right hand to shoulder height and brings his fingertips together. He does a small beat on '^{thi}:ny' and does a series of beats of increasing speed which end just after he produces '°package°'. Although the content of his talk does not appear to contain any metaphorical language, this gesture does. Just as calls are not physically manipulatable, neither are internet or mobile data. Yet his hand position appears to show a physical size of

data that they use to provide this service, enacting ‘tiny’.

So in this extract we have three sets of contrasts being implied:

- 1 The first part of his talk sets out the problem: people think that they don’t pay for their calls but it turns out that they do, so they are paying for things that they think they are not. The second part contains the solution: the service that they provide uses a small bit of data and then calls are genuinely free.
- 2 In his talk he contrasts what customers pay for – a ‘bundle’ of calls versus a ‘tiny bit of data’.
- 3 In his gesture, by enacting the act of ‘bundling’ and ‘a tiny bit’, he reiterates what is in his talk but also adds a further physical element – the ‘bundle’ he appears to be holding is large, as can be seen by the distance between his hands, whereas the ‘tiny bit of data’ can be held

between his closed fingers in his next gesture; this pairing of gestures shows how size is an important concept in this context – a bundle of calls (big) is bad (expensive) but a tiny bit of data (small) is good (cheap).

His choice of language together with his use of gesture serve to highlight the contrast between the problem he describes and the solution his business can provide.

Example 2

Just before the start of this extract the presenter had said that he will list three advantages of the service that his business provides. This example describes the first of these advantages, to do with ‘turnaround times’:

Event 6 – Pitch 8

- 01 E: The first (.) is turnaround times.
 02 (0.4)
 03 Instead of: background checks being processed by a human data
 04 processor .hhh and **>processed< in batches**, (0.3) our:: candidate
 05 driven (.) online software is able to process checks (.) **as and**
 06 **when** they come in (.) and produce live results.

The presenter’s first utterance describes the first advantage of the service that his business provides, to do with ‘turnaround times’. He indicates that there will be a contrast set out in his talk by beginning with ‘Instead of:’. The first part of the contrast sets out two elements of

how current companies provide their service: first, they use ‘a human data processor’ to process background checks, and second, they are ‘>processed< in batches’. The second part of the contrast sets out what the presenter’s company does differently: they use ‘our:: candidate

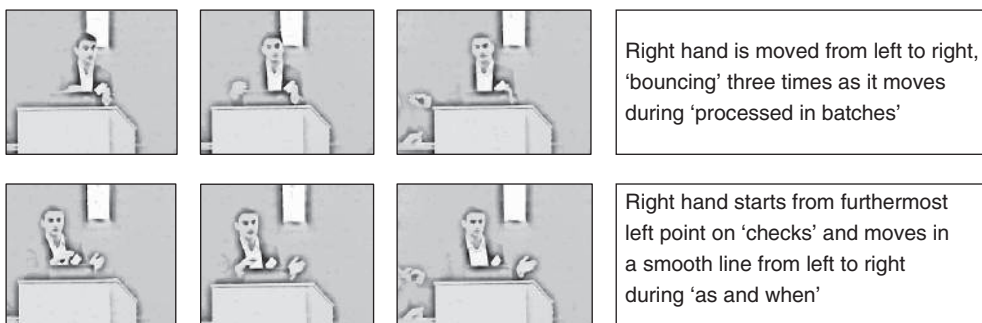


Figure 18.3 Metaphorical gesture on ‘processed in batches’ and ‘as and when’

driven (.) online software', and process checks 'as and when they come in'; he also emphasises the 'us and them' contrast by placing stress on and lengthening 'our:'. So using 'human data processors' and processing checks in 'batches' is set up as the problem, the undesirable way of working and getting results. This is contrasted with using software and processing checks 'as and when', which is more desirable and the solution to the problem.

The specific contrast between how background checks are processed – '>processed<' in *batches*' versus 'process checks (.) *as* and when' – is reflected in the presenter's gesture. At '>processed<' his left hand is held at chest height close to his body. This hand remains roughly in this position. His right hand, however, beats near his left hand and then moves to the right, beating again at the right side of his body, and doing a final beat out to his right side. This bouncing movement appears to illustrate working in batches, with someone physically doing one batch, and then another, and then another. When describing processing checks '*as* and when they come in', the presenter holds his left hand slightly out to his left and moves his right hand from its start position slightly to the right of his left hand on 'checks'

in a smooth line during '*as* and when', finishing with his right hand far out to his right. The two movements – the 'bouncing' and the smooth – follow the same trajectory and end with the speaker's right hand in a very similar position. This same trajectory highlights the difference between the movements: one is halting whereas the other is smooth.

So again there are a set of contrasts in this one utterance:

- 1 The problem of a more time-consuming way to process checks using humans working in batches, contrasted with the solution of using software to process checks as and when with the implication that this is quicker.
- 2 A bumpy hand movement versus a smooth hand movement, which not only illustrates the idea of there being several batches but also implies the idea of a rough or bumpy path versus a smooth and efficient one.

Example 3

In this last extract the entrepreneur explicitly indicates that his company addresses a problem and has a solution: 'So: (.) the ↑*problem* we solv:e for *big* <agencies> ↓*is* ...':

Event 6 – Pitch 11

01 E: So: (.) the ↑*problem* we solv:e for *big* <agencies> ↓*is* when they
 02 have m:ajor clients the (bit-) (0.2) m:ed:ia agencies I mean (0.3)
 03 when they hav:e #a a a# *big* client ↓*in* the <like of> .hhhh
 04 ((company)) or:: er:: (0.3) ye::s (0.5) or: er ((company)) (.)
 05 -> <they want to> (0.2) run: campaigns *acr:o::ss* the board. bu:t
 06 -> they need to use (0.6) a *platform for web* a *platform for mobile*
 07 -> a *platfor:m for digital out of home*.
 08 (0.2)
 09 -> *U::s what we did* (0.2) *is: centralise* (0.2) *every* inventory: (0.3)
 10 *in:side* one single platform.

The entrepreneur begins by saying that the problem he is describing affects 'big agencies', which he then specifies as media agencies by repairing his talk (Schegloff et al., 1977), and he goes on to describe that the problem is specific to a particular need that these 'big agencies' have: having big clients

who want to run campaigns 'across the board', but in order to do so 'they need to use (0.6) a *platform for web* a *platform for mobile* a *platfor:m for digital out of home*'. The implication is that the problem is not that agencies want to go 'across the board' but that in doing so they have to do three separate

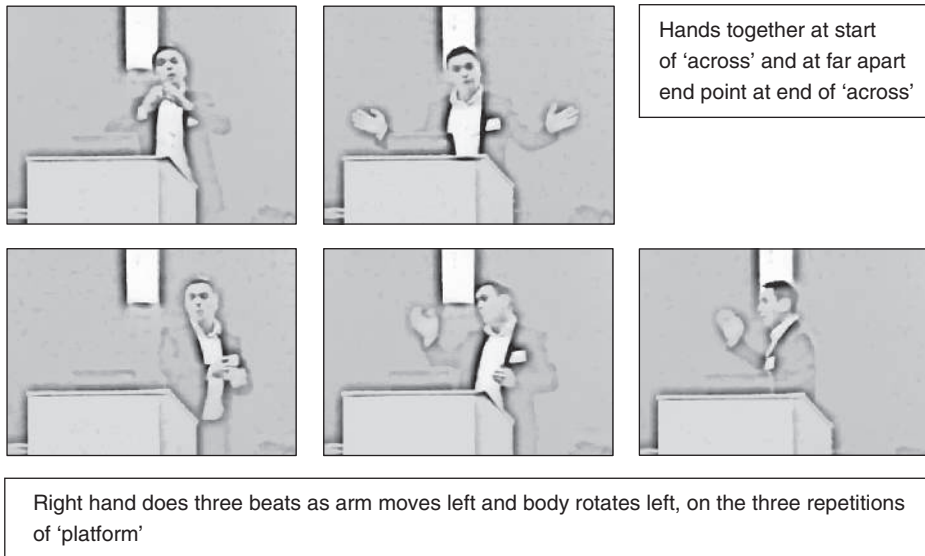


Figure 18.4 Metaphorical gesture on 'across' and 'platform'



Figure 18.5 Metaphorical gesture on 'centralise'

things by using three different platforms. After a 0.2 second gap, he contrasts this in the next part of his talk: rather than going 'across the board' using three platforms that each address a different area, his company has 'centralised' everything within just one platform. He also emphasises the contrast between the existing problem and his company's solution by starting his utterance with 'U::s' which is both stretched and stressed, and then following with what they did to solve the problem.

The language that he uses to describe the problem and solution is metaphoric. So although 'platform' is a technical term used in the realms of software/technology, and

platforms in this context are not things that are physically manipulatable, the term still has implications of the physical. Both 'across the board' and 'platform' conjure up images of physical objects: platforms can be physical levels/areas where you can walk or put things on, and running something across a board suggests moving something physically over a flat space with a specific determined area. The gesture that he uses in conjunction with his talk contributes to this sense of the physical. At the start of 'across' his hands are held together at neck level with his elbows out to the sides but as he produces this word he opens both his arms out wide to his sides. This also suggests a wide breadth of area to

cover when running campaigns. This breadth is further suggested in his gesture when listing the three platforms that need to be used; his right hand moves from right to left in three stages, with a beat on the production of each instance of 'platform'.

During the contrast part of his talk, in which he provides the solution to the problem, he begins his utterance with his arms wide open on 'U::s', and brings them towards each other by the time he completes 'did'. This movement together appears to visually depict 'centralise', and the similar arm shape to his prior utterance continues the theme of breadth and reducing this breadth.

So the entrepreneur's utterance again encompasses a set of contrasts:

- 1 He describes the problem, that there is a wide breadth of different platforms to run across, followed by the solution, that his company's service means that customers only need to use one platform, which is therefore simpler and quicker.
- 2 The verbs that he uses are contrastive: 'run across the board' versus 'centralise every inventory'.
- 3 He contrasts amounts, with the problem involving using three platforms and the solution using only one platform.
- 4 The presenter's gesture shape is similar throughout; however, his initial movement of his arms opening out contrasts with his arms then closing in.
- 5 The first part of the contrast includes three movements: three beats on three repetitions of 'platform'; however, the second part has just one movement, which occurs just before he produces 'centralise'.

These individual elements all serve to highlight the differences between the two parts of the contrast.

Setting up a problem–solution contrast serves two purposes in the pitches here. First, by describing an existing problem the entrepreneur shows that there is a space in their particular market for them to operate in, thereby justifying their existence in the market. By providing the solution to this problem, in the form of what their business

offers, they also (or so they hope) show that their product or service is appropriate to fill the gap in the market that they identified as the problem, thereby justifying their product or service as well. Second, in describing their solution to the problem they are also explaining to their audience something about their product by providing information about the service that they offer. So the whole problem–solution contrast provides the entrepreneurs' audience with both information about their product or service, and a justification for having developed the product or service in the first place.

CONCLUSION

This chapter aims to illustrate an approach that places multimodality at the heart of our analyses of organisational conduct; we give one example of the importance of non-verbal resources in the context of entrepreneurship where entrepreneurs seek to persuade investors to fund their venture. The chapter centres on the data from a video-based study of entrepreneur's pitches for investment at an organised pitch event in the UK. In particular it considers how entrepreneurs employ gestures alongside speech to communicate their venture most effectively. Drawing on data collected as part of a larger study on entrepreneurship, we highlight the role of gesture in entrepreneurship, and multimodal research more generally. In doing so, we show some of the informal and tacit practices that underpin the production of a persuasive message. One notable practice is the use of metaphor in both the entrepreneur's talk and their gesture is also a way to explain something quite abstract that the audience might not have much knowledge about. By using metaphor both verbally and in their arm and hand movements, the entrepreneurs in the examples given here 'give sense' about their products and services to the potential investors in the

audience, by adding commonly known attributes to the more abstract details of their products: a bundle of calls is visually represented as something being physically bundled together, work done in batches is visually depicted as a bumpy process compared to work done ‘as and when’ which is visually depicted as smooth, and using three platforms for a campaign is visually depicted as wide compared to using a centralised platform which is depicted as small. The analyses here show how those creating new ventures have to rely upon their own speech and visual presentation (Baron & Brush, 1999), including their gestures, to naturalise their venture and to provide a compelling and convincing rationale that accounts for its existence and appeals to others for their support. Speakers have a range of resources to use in their interactions: the words they use, the gestures they make, and the metaphor that can be in both the verbal and the physical. Using a multimodal lens, we can look beyond just the spoken element of this kind of data to see how visual elements contribute to what speakers are communicating to their audiences.

REFERENCES

- Alibali, M. W., Heath, D. C. and Myers, H. J. (2001) Effects of visibility between speaker and listener on gesture production: Some gestures are meant to be seen. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 44(2), 169–88.
- Argentin, G., Ghiglione, R. and Dorna, A. (1990) La gestualité et ses effets dans le discours politique. *Psychologie Française*, 35(2), 153–161.
- Baron, R. A. & Brush, C. G. (1999). The role of social skills in entrepreneurs’ success: Evidence from videotapes of entrepreneurs’ presentations. In Reynolds, P. D., Bygrave, W. B., Manigart, S., Mason, C. M., Meyer, G. D., Sapienza, H. J. and Shave, K. G. (Eds.) *Frontiers of entrepreneurship research*. Babson Park, MA: Babson College, 45–57.
- Baron, R. A. and Markman, G. D. (2003) Beyond social capital: The role of entrepreneurs’ social competence in their financial success. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 18(1), 41–60.
- Bell, E. and Davison, J. (2013) Visual management studies: Empirical and theoretical approaches. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15(2), 167–84.

APPENDIX 1: TRANSCRIPTION SYMBOLS

<i>Transcription symbols</i>	
<u>word</u>	Underlining indicates stressed or emphasised sounds
wor:d	Colons indicate lengthened sounds (more ‘:’ indicate a longer stretch)
°word°	Quieter than the surrounding talk
>word<	Faster than the surrounding talk
<word>	Slower than the surrounding talk
↑	Raised pitch within an utterance
↓	Lowered pitch within an utterance
(0.2)	Silence, measured in tenths of a second
(.)	Silence of less than one tenth of a second
.	Lowered or final intonation at end of word/utterance
,	Continuing intonation at end of word/utterance
=	Utterance produced immediately after another with no interval
word-	Cut-off of sound
.hh	Inbreath (more ‘h’s indicate a longer breath)
#word#	Creaky or croaky sound
w ^h ord	Aspiration sound within an utterance
((word))	Anonymised information

- Bird, B. & Schjoedt, L. (2009) Entrepreneurial Behavior: Its Nature, Scope, Recent Research, and Agenda for Future Research. In A. L., Carsrud, & M. Brännback (Eds.) *Understanding the Entrepreneurial Mind: Opening the Black Box*. New York, NY: Springer, 327–58.
- Brush, C. G., Greene P. G. and Hart, M. M. (2001) From initial idea to unique advantage: The entrepreneurial challenge of constructing a resource base. *Academy of Management Executive*, 15(1), 64–78.
- Cassar, G. (2004) The financing of business start-ups. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 19(2), 261–84.
- Chen, X.-P., Yao, X. and Kotha, S. (2009) Entrepreneur passion and preparedness in business plan presentations: A persuasion analysis of venture capitalists' funding decisions. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 52(1), 199–214.
- Cienki, A. (1998) Metaphoric gestures and some of their relations to verbal metaphoric expressions. In J.-P. Koenig (Ed.) *Discourse and Cognition: Bridging the Gap*. Stanford, CA: CSLI, 189–204.
- Cienki, A. (2005) Image schemas and gesture. In B. Hampe (Ed.) *From Perception to Meaning: Image Schemas in Cognitive Linguistics*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 421–42.
- Clark, A. (1996) *Being There: Putting Brain, Body and World Together Again*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
- Clarke, J. (2011), Revitalizing Entrepreneurship: How visual symbols are used in entrepreneurial performances. *Journal of Management Studies*, 48(6), 1365–91.
- Collier, J. and Collier, M. (1986) *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.
- Cornelissen, J. P. and Clarke, J. (2010) Imagining and rationalizing opportunities: Inductive reasoning, and the creation and justification of new ventures. *Academy of Management Review*, 35(4), 539–57.
- Cornelissen, J. P., Clarke, J. S. and Cienki, A. (2012) Sensegiving in entrepreneurial contexts: The use of metaphors in speech and gesture to gain and sustain support for novel business ventures. *International Small Business Journal*, 30(3), 213–41.
- Curl, T. S. and Drew, P. (2008) Contingency and action: A comparison of two forms of requesting. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 41(2), 129–53.
- Drew, P. and Holt, E. (1988) Complainable matters: The use of idiomatic expressions in making complaints. *Social Problems*, 35(4), 398–417.
- Glenberg, A. M. and Kaschak, M. P. (2002) Grounding language in action. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 9(3), 558–65.
- Goldin-Meadow, S. (1999) The role of gesture in communication and thinking. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 3(11), 419–429.
- Goldin-Meadow S. and McNeill, D. (1999) The role of gesture and mimetic representation in making language the province of speech. In M. C. Corballis and S. Lea (Eds.) *The Descent of Mind*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 155–72.
- Goodwin, C. (1981) *Conversational Organization: Interaction between Speakers and Hearers*. New York: Academic Press.
- Heritage, J. and Greatbatch, D. (1986) Generating applause: A study of rhetoric and response at party political conferences. *American Journal of Sociology*, 92(1), 110–57.
- Iledema, R. (2001) Analysing film and television: A social semiotic account of *Hospital: An Unhealthy Business*. In T. van Leeuwen, and C. Jewitt *Handbook of Visual Analysis*. London: Sage, 183–204.
- Iledema, R. (2007) On the multi-modality, materiality and contingency of organization discourse. *Organization Studies*, 28(6), 931–46.
- Jancsary, D., Höllerer, M. A. and Meyer, R. E. (2015) Critical analysis of visual and multi-modal texts. In R. Wodak and M. Meyer (Eds.) *Methods of Critical Discourse Studies (3rd ed.)*. London: Sage, 180–204.
- Jefferson, G. (2004) Glossary of transcript symbols with an introduction. In G. H. Lerner (Ed.) *Conversation Analysis: Studies from the First Generation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 13–32.
- Jefferson, G., Sacks, H. and Schegloff, E. A. (1987) Notes on laughter in the pursuit of intimacy. In G. Button and J. R. E. Lee (Eds.) *Talk and Social Organisation*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 152–205.
- Jones, S. E. and LeBaron, C. D. (2002) Research on the relationship between verbal and non-verbal communication: Emerging integrations. *Journal of Communication*, 52(3), 499–521.

- Kaschak, M. P., Madden, C. J., Therriault, D. J., Yaxley, R. H., Aveyard, M., Blanchard, A. A. and Zwaan, R. A. (2005) Perception of motion affects language processing. *Cognition*, 94(3), 79–89.
- Kendon, A. (1980) Gesticulation and speech: Two aspects of the process of utterance. In M. R. Key (Ed.) *The Relationship of Verbal and Nonverbal Communication*. The Hague: Mouton, 207–227.
- Kendon, A. (1983) Gesture and speech: How they interact. In Wiemann, J. M. and Harrison R.P. *Nonverbal Interaction*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 13–43.
- Kendon, A. (2004) *Gesture: Visible Action as Utterance*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Kress, G. (2011) 'Partnerships in research': Multimodality and ethnography. *Qualitative Research*, 11(3), 239–60.
- Kress, G. and van Leeuwen, T. (2001) *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication*. London: Arnold.
- Kress, G. & van Leeuwen, T. (2006) *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Leander, K. (2002) Silencing in classroom interaction: Drawing and relating social space. *Discourse Processes*, 34(2), 193–235.
- Lerner, G. H. and Kitzinger, C. (2007) Extraction and aggregation in the repair of individual and collective self-reference. *Discourse Studies*, 9(4), 526–57.
- Loring, D., Meador, K., Allison, J. and Wright, J. (2000) Relationship between motor and language activation using fMRI. *Neurology*, 54(4), 981–3.
- Luff, P. and Heath, C. (2012) Some 'technical challenges' of video analysis: Social actions, objects, material realities and the problems of perspective. *Qualitative Research*, 12(3), 255–79.
- Maricchiolo, F., Gnisci, A., Bonaiuto, M. & Ficca, G. (2009) Effects of different types of hand gestures in persuasive speech on receivers' evaluations. *Language and Cognitive Processes*, 24(2): 239–66.
- Mason, C. M. and Harrison, R. T. (2000) Investing in technology ventures: What do business angels look for at the initial screening stage? In *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research*, Proceedings of the Babson-Kauffman Entrepreneurship Research Conference.
- McNeill, D. (1992) *Hand and Mind: What Gestures Reveal about Thought*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Müller, C. (1998) *Redegebegleitende Gesten: Kulturgeschichte – Theorie – Sprachvergleich*. Berlin: Berlin Verlag.
- Philips, N., Lawrence, T. B. and Hardy, C. (2004) Discourse and institutions. *Academy of Management Review*, 29(4), 635–52.
- Peräkylä, A. (2004) Conversation analysis. In C. Seale, D. Silverman, J. Gubrium & G. Gobo (Eds.) *Qualitative Research Practice*. London: Sage, pp. 165–179.
- Plowman, L. and Stephen, C. (2008) The big picture? Video and the representation of interaction. *British Educational Research Journal*, 34(4), 541–65.
- Pomerantz, A. (1984) Agreeing and disagreeing with assessments: Some features of preferred and dispreferred turn shapes. In J. M. Atkinson & J. Heritage (Eds.) *Structures of Social Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 57–101.
- Prosser, J. (1998) *Image-based Research: A Sourcebook for Qualitative Researchers*. London: Routledge.
- Rendle-Short, J. (2006) *The Academic Presentation: Situated Talk in Action*. Aldershot UK: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.
- Richardson, D. C., Spivey, M. J., Barsalou, L. W. and McRae, K. (2003) Spatial representations activated during real-time comprehension of verbs. *Cognitive Science*, 27(5), 767–80.
- Schegloff, E. A. (1984) On some gestures' relation to talk. In J. M. Atkinson & J. Heritage (Eds.) *Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 266–295.
- Schegloff, E. A. (2007) *Sequence organization in interaction: Volume 1: A primer in conversation analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schegloff, E. A., Jefferson, G. and Sacks, H. (1977) The preference for self-correction in the organization of repair in conversation. *Language*, 53(2), 361–82.
- Semin, G. R. and Cacioppo, J. T. (2008) Grounding social cognition: Synchronization, coordination, and co-regulation. In G. R. Semin and E. R. Smith (Eds.) *Embodied Grounding: Social, Cognitive, Affective and*

- Neuroscientific Approaches*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 119–47.
- Stinchcombe, A. L. (1965) Social structure and organizations. In J. G. March (Ed.) *Handbook of Organizations*. Chicago, IL: Rand-McNally, 142–93.
- Stivers, T. and Sidnell, J. (Eds.) (2013) *The handbook on conversation analysis*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Streeck, J. (2008) Gesture in political communication: A case study of the democratic presidential candidates during the 2004 primary candidates. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 41(2), 154–186.
- Streeck, J., Goodwin C. and LeBaron, C. (2011) *Embodied Interaction: Language and Body in the Material World*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Vecchio, R. P. (2003) Entrepreneurship and leadership: common trends and common threads. *Human Resource Management Review*, 13(2): 303–327.

Collage Visual Data: Pathways to Data Analysis

Emmanuella Plakoyiannaki and Georgia Stavraki

INTRODUCTION

Collage (*papiers collés*) constitutes an artistic technique and an art genre (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010). Its origins can be traced in the works of Picasso and Braque in the beginning of the twentieth century (Vaughan, 2005) particularly during their artistic experimentations in the period of synthetic cubism (Taylor, 2004). Its name comes from the French word *coller* (that is pasting, sticking or gluing) (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; Hoffman, 1989), and denotes a ‘glued work’ generated by the usage of fragments of images that are juxtaposed on a flat surface (for example on a paper or canvas) (Hoffman, 1989). The artistic technique of collage has been conceptualized as an abstract, revolutionary and relativistic form of art (Kjellman-Chapin, 2006; Kuspit, 1989; Rosenberg, 1989). Particularly, collage art is conceived as a type of abstraction, since its composition lies in the aggregation of visual representations of identifiable objects, which when they

are placed next to each other result in an incongruous effect. Collage is characterized as a revolutionary art form, because it bridges the (aesthetic) gap between art and life by mixing formal (for instance artistic techniques) and material realities (for example the incorporation of pieces of everyday life such as images from magazines, bus tickets) (Rosenberg, 1989). By so doing, collage can reflect the way individuals experience the world (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; Liao, 2013) by unravelling ‘multiple layers and signposts pointing to a variety of forms and realities, and to the possibility or suggestion of countless new realities’ (Kjellman-Chapin, 2006, p. 95).

Through its arts-based origin, the technique of collage has entered the world of research and forms an approach of qualitative inquiry (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Vaughan, 2005). Indeed, a great number of qualitative researchers argue that collages represent a visual interpretive tool, which elicits information that lies in the black box of

individuals (for example introspection, inner conflicts, etc.) (Belk et al., 2003; Koll et al., 2010). This potential of collages to enter the private worlds of subjects and to uncover inner thoughts, feelings and perspectives, contributed to the conception of collage more as a projective technique rather than as an arts-informed mode of inquiry (Boddy, 2005). This is evident in consumer and management studies, in which the aesthetic nature of collages appears to be undermined by their methodological categorization as a projective technique that aims at disclosing individuals' desires, feelings and wishes (Boddy, 2005; Donoghue, 2000). The employment of collage as a projective technique lies in the theoretical foundations of psychology rather than in the artistic origins of collage. For instance, various consumer researchers have employed the projective technique of collage in order to unveil the emotional aspects of consumption (Costa et al., 2003), the consumption imagery and its meaning (Havlena & Holak, 1996), the richness and complexities of consumers' lived experiences (Hogg et al., 1999; cf. Koll et al., 2010) and the unconscious desires and feelings of consumers (Belk et al., 2003). Similarly, different management studies have used arts-based methods as projective techniques to reveal managers' unconscious thoughts and feelings as well as to foster managers' reflections upon tacit knowledge and experiences (Taylor & Ladkin, 2009).

Despite this prevailing view of collage as a projective technique, its aesthetic nature has been recently highlighted by qualitative researchers (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999; Vaughan, 2005). Indeed, collages are intrusive art entities with a hybrid ontology (Taylor, 2004) that can either manifest the imagined or real with the sensation, the surfaces and textures that make up their world. Arts-informed inquiry is rooted in qualitative research (Rolling, 2010) as it employs artistic methods within a research process and acknowledges the unique characteristics of these artistic methods (Eisner, 2008). As Eisner puts it 'any talk about arts-informed

research must take into account the characteristics of the particular art form or art forms that are being employed' (2008, p. 8). Moreover, the 'interdisciplinary' nature of collages (i.e. operating both as an aesthetic technique and as a form of visual data) manifests their value as a heuristic for gaining in-depth and new understandings of key perceptual notions; for disclosing conceptual connections that lead to novel and even to paradoxical insights/meanings (cf. Deleuze, 2000); for eliciting multiple narratives that represent individuals' inner worlds (Van Schalkwyk, 2010) and for providing a decentring technique (for instance collage representations unsettle expected views of understanding) for understanding the ways in which individuals experience the world (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; Poldma & Stewart, 2004).

Viewed in this light, collage is an artistic structure of heterogeneous elements that can capture the contradictions of modern life (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Vaughan, 2005). This postmodern epistemology of collage is manifested in its associative and paratactical structure, through which multiple realities and ways of perceiving and understanding these realities can be revealed (Kjellman-Chapin, 2006). Collage is a representational arts-informed form of qualitative inquiry that involves abstract, metaphorical and imaginative representations, which disrupt the normative ways of depicting and making sense. Collage as a representational arts-informed form of inquiry can be conceived as a living inquiry, which indicates 'an embodied encounter constituted through visual and textual understandings and experiences rather than mere visual and textual representations' (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 902). This conception parallels the more-than-representation mode of thinking (e.g. emphasis on actions and practices, Lorimer, 2005; Lorimer, 2010), since collages by weaving together the practices of knowing (theoria), doing (praxis) and poesis (making) can carve out novel and multiple orders in experience (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; cf. Vannini, 2015).

Based on the above, the purpose of this chapter is threefold. First, it attempts to illustrate the discrete creative strategies of collages that have not been exploited in qualitative research. The identification of these creative strategies is crucial since they generate the heuristic quality of collages for revealing unexpected conceptual associations, tacit understandings and new narratives. Second, it aims to provide a review of the existing methodologies for analysing visual data in order to argue that there is still a lack of a process of analysis which can capture and interpret the 'interdisciplinary' nature of collages and surface their heuristic quality. Third, it aims at proposing a process for analysing collages, which embraces their unique idiosyncrasy. It unfolds the methodological and interpretive potential of collage visual data that has been under-exploited in qualitative research (Butler-Kisber, 2002; Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999; Vaughan, 2005). This potential emerges from its arts-based origin, which calls and challenges researchers not only to engage differently with this form of visual data (Cambre, 2013; Simons & McCormack, 2007) but also to 'move beyond the more traditional, categorizing analytic approaches' in order to analyse them (Butler-Kisber et al., 2003, p. 133). This chapter addresses the challenges relating to collage analysis by proposing the process of heuristic analysis that relies on collage creative strategies and produces 'a more embodied, intuitive and dynamic interpretation' (Butler-Kisber et al., 2003, p. 133) of this form of visual data.

THE CREATIVE STRATEGIES OF COLLAGES: JUXTAPOSITIONS AND METAPHORS

Collage as a composition of an imagery created by a combination of materials (such as, for example, printed images, three dimensional objects, glued paper) is a practice that is founded on a paradox, i.e. each disparate image of a collage acquires a new life and meaning through its relation to other images

posted on the collage surface (Kilgard, 2009; Vaughan, 2005). This interplay of multiple images on a collage surface manifests collage's paratactical structure (Kjellman-Chapin, 2006) that emerges from the juxtaposition of asyndetic materials, which in turn create a representation of 'a heterogeneous field of coexisting and contesting images and ideas' (Garoiian & Gaudelius, 2008, p. 64). Thus, the act of placing one image in the context of another as well as connecting one idea to another stress that the collage technique promotes both physical and conceptual juxtapositions (Kilgard, 2009), which reveal the visceral, associative and nonlinear meaning structure of collage. In this way, juxtapositions by having both aesthetic and epistemological dimension 'form the basis for discussion and learning' (Kilgard, 2009, p. 15).

As such, juxtapositions are not only part of a collage's syntax (namely they represent a discrete creative strategy in which every collage work is built on) but also generate its heuristic quality for revealing new conceptual connections, illuminating previously unconceivable insights and offering decentring approaches for representing and understanding the ways in which individuals experience the world (Butler-Kisber, 2007, 2008; Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; cf. Cornelissen, 2005; Norris, 2008). More specifically, juxtapositions construct (new) relationships between the disparate elements that are put together and by doing so, they create and reveal the meaning(s) of a collage. Therefore, juxtapositions manifest the embeddedness of images in a shared world and thus, the implicit connection between these disparate images which unveils the life that exists in a collage. Kilgard (2009) calls this life 'the body of collage' in order to describe the intentional repetition of form, colour, texture or theme that characterizes (and connects) the disparate images of a collage. The body of collage by further emphasizing the associative structure of collages can reveal the metaphorical interconnection between the disparate image fragments in the bounded

space of the collage (cf. Cornelissen, 2005; Marshall, 2005).

Accordingly, metaphors are another discrete creative strategy of collage (Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999; Norris, 2008), through which the conceptual processes that underpin collage making and the generative impact of collages (i.e. collages potential to open up new and multiple ways of seeing, conceptualizing and understanding) are illuminated (Boxenbaum & Rouleau, 2011; Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; Cornelissen, 2005; Marshall, 2005). Metaphors in collage art emerge from juxtapositions that (de)construct the disparate images of a collage (Khatena & Khatena, 1990; Marshall, 2008) and communicate the collagist's attempts to express an idea, to evoke imagery and to connect (Clements, 1982). Viewed in this light, metaphors in collage art are conceived as visual compositions of dissimilar elements that propose anomalous relationships evolving from the juxtaposition of physically noncompossible elements (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; Carroll, 2003; Pachler, 2010). In other words, the anomalous relationships in a collage surface by transforming the original content of each image in the collage and thus, by evoking figural transformations, result in the creation of visual metaphors.

Visual metaphors in collage art constitute visual expressions of metaphorical thoughts (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; cf. ElRefaie, 2003), which imply a comparison process between the irrelevant images that create the visual metaphor. According to Carroll (2003), through this comparison both the metaphorical insight and the metaphorical intention can be grasped and as such, lead to the creation of new conceptual understanding(s) for both the collagist and the viewer. In this respect, the creative and imaginative dimensions of visual metaphors (for example the creation of relationships between noncompossible elements) reflect the transformative powers of metaphor whose source lies in the acts of discovery and invention (Khatena & Khatena, 1990). Thus, metaphors can not only act as interpretive frameworks for revealing unconscious connections and new understandings of collage representations (Davis, 2008) but can also enhance the interpretive viability of collages (that is the plurality and openness of a collage's meaning) which invites both viewers and collage creators to look beyond the literal and to uncover the variety of realities that can be found in a collage surface (cf. Cornelissen, 2005).

As such, the heuristic quality of collages (i.e. quality in opening up new and multiple

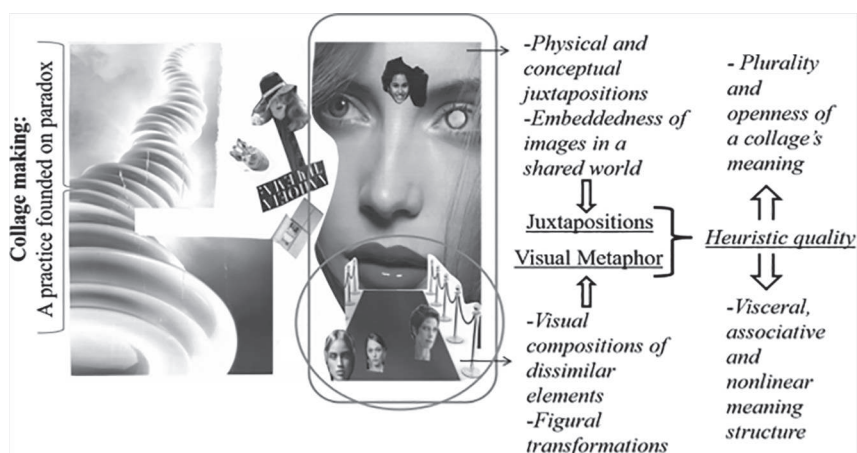


Figure 19.1 Collage 1: The creative strategies of collage

ways of seeing, conceptualizing and understanding, Cornelissen, 2005) evolves from the creative strategies of juxtapositions and visual metaphors (see Figure 19.1: Collage 1). Specifically, the juxtapositions on a collage representation by disrupting the linear process of thinking (Butler-Kisber, 2007) produce a variety of metaphors where the power of visual conceptualization lies (Feinstein, 1982; Jeffers, 1996; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Thus, it is through these creative strategies that collages can exhibit their unique idiosyncrasy and as such, act as a methodological technique that can provide new ways of understanding and reveal unexpected associations (Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999).

CURRENT APPROACHES FOR COLLAGE ANALYSIS

The majority of qualitative studies employing collage as a method of data collection have interpreted it by using the method of content analysis (Hamrouni & Touzi, 2011; Havlena & Holak, 1996; Hogg et al., 1999). In these studies, the employment of content analysis focuses mainly on collagists' interpretations of the meaning of the images that compose their collages (Costa et al., 2003; Koll et al., 2010; Mannay, 2010). This practice of inviting collagists to express the meanings that they assign to their collages is referred to as *auteur theory* (Rose, 2001), through which researchers are able to reveal and understand the internal narrative of the collage (that is what collagists intend to show through their collages). Content analysis is a very popular method in social sciences research for analysing visual material, since it can minimize the ambiguity of non-verbal expressions by offering 'objective, systematic and quantitative analysis' of the visual content (Ball & Smith, 1992, p. 21). Content analysis concentrates on identifying and quantifying the different images embedded

in a collage; it does not, however, scrutinize the interconnectedness of image fragments, which essentially creates the composition of a collage (cf. Berelson, 1952; Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010). Thus, through the employment of content analysis the researcher overlooks the associative and paratactical structure of collages and thus he/she is not able to tap deeper layers of meaning which lie in the juxtapositions and visual metaphors of the collage.

Other qualitative researchers have interpreted collages by employing semiotic approaches to collage analysis (du Preez & Roos, 2008; MacKenzie & Wolf, 2012). Despite the fact that semiotic analysis allows researchers to interpret the literal meaning of the images that compose a collage (du Preez & Roos, 2008) and to disclose the plurality of meanings that an image holds (MacKenzie & Wolf, 2012), the employment of semiotic analysis may impede researchers in examining the interconnectedness of the image fragments of collages. Moreover, while semiotic analysis is a well-established approach for investigating how images communicate a message, it is mainly concerned with how individuals perceive the meaning of an image and as such, it does not reflect how individuals produce interpretations of an image that they construct (Bal & Bryson, 1991). Further, while semiotics attempt to analyse visual patterns of communication through the use of metaphors (Labbo, 1996), this method may mask the metaphorical thought that underlines the subjective process of collage construction, since it focuses on the compositional structures of signs, which generate the meaning of visual representation. Also, semiotic analysis is a method that can grasp the visual imagery of collages (cf. Foss, 1994; Jewitt & Oyama, 2001), yet this method is not concerned with the aesthetic dimensions of the collage technique, such as its juxtapositions, through which the collagist can 'challenge the way that we see everyday objects' (Brockelman, 2001, p. 118).

In addition to the aforementioned frameworks for analysing visual images, Rose (2001) proposes other methodologies for interpreting visual images, such as compositional analysis, psychoanalysis and discourse analysis. Compositional analysis is based on art history approaches and focuses on analysing the compositional elements of a visual image (see also Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). These compositional elements refer to the content of an image (i.e. the representation), its colours (i.e. description of colours and how they are used in order to stress specific elements), its spatial organization (i.e. how creators manipulate the perspective so as to create specific visual effects), the light (i.e. what type of light is represented in the image) and its expressive content (i.e. viewers' responses to an image). This method, by concentrating on the investigation of the artistic techniques used in the construction of an image and by interpreting the visual effects that an image produces, is considered to be more applicable for analysing drawings rather than collages (Rose, 2001). This is due to the fact that the compositional elements that are analysed and interpreted by this method do not describe the aesthetic nature of collage making (cf. Kjellman-Chapin, 2006). For example, collage making by integrating multiple and heterogeneous fragments disrupts conventional sequencing and results in the creation of a randomized rather than a concrete composition (Davis, 2008; Kilgard, 2009; Kjellman-Chapin, 2006). Moreover, the compositional element of spatial organization refers to strict geometry and the position of angles, which are relevant to paintings rather than collage representations where oblique and overlapping shapes exist. Indeed, the specific focal points that are proposed by spatial organization cannot be applied to collages, since a collage creator may juxtapose images that convey the metaphorical meaning of collage in oblique angles and not in the frontal angles (Vaughan, 2005).

Psychoanalysis constitutes another potential method for analysing collage representations. Despite the fact that from a historical point of view this method is closely related with collage art (for instance the influence of psychoanalysis science in the creation of collages (Foster, 2004)), from a methodological viewpoint psychoanalysis is considered as being more appropriate for deciphering the meaning of film images and investigating the influence of film images on spectators (Rose, 2001). More specifically, psychoanalysis by examining the image itself and its influence on its audiences concentrates on the interaction that takes place between an image and its viewer. As such, this method conceives collage representations as a projective technique, which allows researchers to access individuals' inner worlds as well as their unconscious thoughts through the use of visual stimuli, rather than as an arts-informed technique that unfolds the creative strategies that individuals use in order to develop the internal narrative of the image (i.e. the meaning that the creator intends to give to his/her collage) (Rose, 2001). Moreover, the method of psychoanalysis takes into consideration the repetition of form, colour, texture or theme (i.e. body of collage) in a collage surface, yet it mainly concentrates on the interpretation of such patterns of repetition in light of psychoanalytic concepts (Rose, 2001; Stokes, 1982). Thus, psychoanalysis is not concerned with the analysis of the creative techniques of collages (namely juxtapositions and visual metaphors) that lie beyond the creation of such patterns of repetition and which enhance the plurality and openness of a collage's meaning (i.e. collage's interpretive viability, Cornelissen, 2005).

Finally, Rose (2001) also considers discourse analysis as a means for investigating the social meanings of images, that is, how images create particular visions of the social world. This method of analysis conceives visuality as a form of discourse and concentrates on the images as well as

on the intertextuality of the meanings that each image holds, namely on the meanings of other images and texts, which inform a specific image. This method of analysing visual data mainly focuses on the visual context of an image (i.e. interpreting one image in relation to the meaning of another image) in order to make sense of its (social) meaning (Mitchell et al., 2011). As a result, discourse analysis does not pay attention to the metaphorical seeing of an image as well as to the subjective meaning with which the creator intends to imbue an image. In this way, this method by being mainly concerned with ‘the social modality of the image site’ as well as by paying ‘careful attention to the image itself’ (Rose, 2001, p. 140), overlooks collagists’ interpretations of the meaning of the images that compose their collages as well as the metaphorical content of collages (Raaberg, 1998). Table 19.1 summarizes the aforementioned discussion.

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH FOR COLLAGE ANALYSIS: AN ILLUSTRATION

In order to overcome the limitations of the aforementioned methodological approaches to collage analysis and thus, to capture the rich interpretive potential of collage visual data generated by its aesthetic qualities (Kilgard, 2009), the authors propose and discuss a process of analysing collage data, namely heuristic analysis. Heuristic analysis denotes an abductive inferential process of analysis (Cornelissen et al., 2005; cf. Eco, 1995; Kilgard, 2009), which identifies and exploits the paratactical and associative structure of collage manifested in the creative strategies of juxtapositions and visual metaphors. These creative strategies of collage are at the heart of collage making and as such, they disclose collage’s creative potential of seeing and understanding the world

Table 19.1 Current methodologies for analysing collage visual data

<i>Methods</i>	<i>Content analysis</i>	<i>Semiotics</i>	<i>Compositional analysis</i>	<i>Psychoanalysis</i>	<i>Discourse analysis</i>
<i>Main purpose of analysis</i>	To capture (numerically) the meanings that a creator assigns to an image	To analyse how images communicate a message and how individuals perceive an image	To investigate the compositional elements of a visual image	To analyse the interaction that takes place between an image and its viewer	To investigate the social meanings of images
<i>Advantages</i>	Minimizes the ambiguity of non-verbal expressions	Investigates patterns of communication through the use of metaphors	Focuses on artistic techniques and interprets the visual effects that an image produces	Reveals individuals’ inner worlds and unconscious thoughts	Focuses on the intertextuality of the meanings that each image holds
<i>Limitations for collage analysis</i>	Overlooks the associative and paratactical structure of collages	Does not consider the aesthetic dimensions of collages	The compositional elements that are analysed by this method do not describe the aesthetic nature of collage making	Is not concerned with the analysis of the creative techniques of collages	Overlooks what collagists intent to show through the metaphorical content of collages

from multiple and new perspectives (e.g. perception of new and unexpected relations and connections).

This process of analysis (i.e. heuristic analysis) is based on the aforementioned synthesis of literatures concerning the discrete creative strategies of collages and illustrates the stages that we followed in order to identify and interpret these creative strategies, which have been neglected in the analysis of collages in qualitative research. Prior to the discussion of this analysis, a brief presentation of the research, within which collages were constructed, is presented.

The Research Context of the Collection of Collage Visual Data

The proposed method of collage analysis discussed in this chapter was emerged from an interpretive case study research (Stake, 2005), which aimed at providing an in-depth understanding on the creation of identity narratives that arise from the simultaneous interplay of consumers' multiple and competing identity positions in the context of contemporary art. The concept of multiple identity positions in the aforementioned research demonstrated the dynamic, multiple and dialogical nature of the self, which has been acknowledged and investigated by different disciplines, such as psychology (Hermans et al., 1992), consumer research (Ahuvia, 2005; Bahl & Milne, 2010) and management research (Belova, 2010; Pratt & Foreman, 2000). In this case study the Biennale of Contemporary Art Exhibition that was held in Greece in 2011 served as the research context, and the case study evidence emerged from various data sources including visitors' reflective diaries, interviews and collages.

The technique of collage as a method of data collection was chosen in the aforementioned case study research because of its power to elicit and produce rich representations of the various inner states that compose a multiple identity repertoire (Bahl & Milne,

2010; Van Schalkwyk, 2010). As such, the method of collage not only facilitated the informants (i.e. Biennale visitors) of the aforementioned case study to meet their multiple identity positions but also elicited more vivid and rich descriptions of their multiple identity positions that surfaced during their Biennale experiences. Furthermore, through collages our informants would be able to reveal the relationships and possible dialogues between their multiple identity positions which despite the fact that they occur below the level of awareness, participate in the creation of an identity narrative (Van Schalkwyk, 2010).

Each Biennale visitor who participated in the case study research, was invited to participate in a process of collage making that would depict his/her multiple self-states connected with the Biennale exhibition (Bahl & Milne, 2010; Van Schalkwyk, 2010). Each informant created the collage individually and was provided with the necessary materials (namely scissors, paper, paste and magazines) in order to complete the task. When participants completed their collages, they were invited by the researchers to compose a written narrative, in which they were asked to elaborate both on the associations and on the themes, ideas and texts that were presented in their collages (Koll et al., 2010).

Heuristic Analysis: An Analysis of Collages' Creative Strategies

The heuristic analysis of collages, which emerged from the case study research of the Biennale exhibition, was conducted in the following three intertwined stages:

Stage 1: Deconstruction of collages. In order for the authors to investigate the compositional elements of each collage as well as the themes, ideas and texts that were presented in collages, they deconstructed each collage and documented the meaning(s) of each image fragment (Van Schalkwyk, 2010). Specifically, in this first stage of

analysis we follow Van Schalkwyk's (2010) process of collage deconstruction, within which the literal and latent/metaphorical meanings of each image of a collage is identified and documented first on a clean sheet of paper and next in a story grid. The recording of the literal meaning of the collage consists of documenting the fragments of images posted on a collage, whereas the cataloguing of the latent meanings of the images glued on a collage surface involves the interpretation of the metaphorical meanings of a collage. Collage 2a in Figure 19.2 depicts this first step of the process of collage deconstruction, namely the recording of the literal and symbolic meanings of the images that compose a collage on a clean sheet of paper.

Next, the creation of story grids for each collage representation follows (Table 19.2). Story grids are 'a unique protocol for each participant' (Van Schalkwyk, 2010, p. 684) and involve the documentation of the literal and symbolic meanings of the disparate images of a collage, as well as the collagist's story behind each image. As such, story grids not only record the metaphorical meaning that the collagist assigns to the images that are glued on his/her collage surface but also reveal the implicit connection that exists

between the heterogeneous image fragments, namely they reveal the body of a collage. In our research the identification of the body of each collage was based on the intentional repetition of theme, which implicitly connected the heterogeneous images posted on each Biennale visitor's collage representation. Our choice to identify the body of each collage according to the intentional repetition of theme was determined by the fact that the reappearance of a specific theme could generate more illuminating insights about the conceptual ideas that underpinned collage creation in the context of our study about the creation of polyphonic identity narratives (Van Schalkwyk, 2010).

As Table 19.2 depicts, the recognition as well as the interpretation of the repetitive theme that connects the image fragments evolves from collagists' stories regarding the essence of their collages (Markham, 2005; Vaughan, 2005). Particularly in Collage 2a, the theme that connects the image fragments (i.e. the body of collage) was interpreted by the authors as *parallaxes*. The concept of *parallaxes* is defined by the *Oxford Dictionary* as the 'effect whereby the position or direction of an object appears to differ when viewed from different positions, e.g. through the

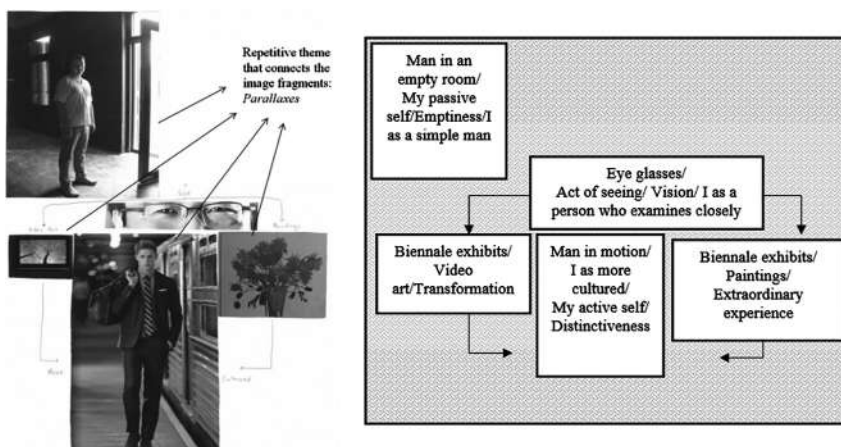


Figure 19.2 Collage 2a: Transcription of the literal and symbolic meanings of the images posted on a collage surface

Table 19.2 Example of Collage 2a's story grid

<i>Denotative meaning</i>	<i>Metaphoric meaning</i>	<i>Collagist's story</i>	Body of collage: Parallaxes
Man	Emptiness Informality Simplicity Passiveness	Before my visit to the Biennale I was like this man in the picture, namely like a simple man, who does not hold this kind of experience.	
Eye glasses	Vision Examination Performance Seeing differently	The eye glasses symbolize my Biennale experience. <i>During my visit I examined closely the different Biennale exhibits, such as the video art exhibits and the various paintings, and by doing so, I felt that I could view myself from a different perspective.</i>	
TV/ paintings	Artworks Transformation Extraordinariness	These two images that depict the same image, <i>which can be seen through different mediums, show my transformation.</i> I entered the exhibition as a simple man, and through this experience <i>I can see myself through another angle</i> , namely I as more cultured.	
Man with baggage	Knowledge Alteration Culture Holding Motion	This image <i>symbolizes another version of myself</i> , a version that was unknown to me. This man, contrary to the man depicted in the first picture, is in motion and more cultured. I see myself like being this man. A man who leaves the exhibition and holds in his hands this kind of experience.	

viewfinder and the lens of a camera'. We used this term in order to define the body of Collage 2a, since this term is in accordance with the collagist's story about the essence of his collage (Table 19.2) and manifests the implicit connection that this collagist assigned to his collage. Specifically, the parallaxes theme signals this informant's shifting identity perspectives and is manifested in the employment of image fragments that according to the creator/collagist portray the same images that are viewed by different angles (that is a man as passive and a man as active, the same artwork exhibited by different artistic mediums).

Stage 2: Identification and interpretation of juxtapositions. After the discovery of the body of each collage, the identification of each collage's physical and conceptual juxtapositions follows. In other words, this stage of the heuristic analysis involves the detection of the strategy (that is juxtapositions) through which a collagist deconstructs and reconstructs the meaning of the images

that compose his/her collage. The identification of juxtapositions entails the investigation of visual relationships depicted in a collage surface and through which concrete images lose their authentic meaning and represent abstract ideas. The detection and interpretation of these relationships begin from examining a collage as a whole (that is as one image) and are based both on the interpretation of the body of each collage and on the story that the collagist assigns to each image that is posted on his/her collage.

As such, in this stage of the heuristic analysis, the researcher unearths and interprets the meaning of juxtapositions by paying attention to the relationships that a collagist creates between the different images that compose his/her collage and to the implicit meaning that the collagist intends to suggest through these relationships. For example, in Collage 2a, the collagist by juxtaposing the images of eye glasses, the two artworks and the man in the train station, constructs a relationship between these images, which in turn provides

a new way of seeing and understanding this collagist's experience in the Biennale exhibition. The collagist manifests the relationship between these elements not only visually (see the arrows that connect these images and the positioning of these images side by side) but also verbally through his story (see in Table 19.2 how the collagist connects the stories of these images and in accordance with the body of his collage). The authors interpreted these juxtapositions depicted in Collage 2a as representing the collagist's performance of himself over the experience (that is he abandons his passive self and performs over the experience through his active self) and the outcome of his experience (that is the transformation of himself). Also, through these juxtapositions, the collagist creates a contextually anomalous relationship between these elements. This anomalous relationship is manifested in the unexpected position of the eye glasses above the head of a man (i.e. normally one does not expect to see eye glasses above the head of one person) and the painting as an uncommon extension of the coach's window. Through this anomalous relationship the collagist creates a visual metaphor, which is the second creative strategy used in collage creation and constitutes the third stage of collage analysis.

Stage 3: Analysis of metaphorical relationships. This final stage of the heuristic analysis entails the identification and interpretation of the visual metaphorical relationships that appear on a collage surface. The identification of the visual metaphorical relationships of a collage is based on the recognition of the anomalous relationships generated by the juxtapositions (see also stage 2) that create presentational and conceptual transformations of the collage image (cf. Phillips & McQuarrie, 2004). The interpretation of the visual metaphorical relationships that are created and suggested by collagists emerges from a comparison process between the juxtaposed images (Carroll, 2003; cf. Feinstein, 1982). In other words, the visual metaphorical relationship that a collage suggests is seen as a comparison in

which one image transfers its properties, relations and/or metaphorical meanings to another image (Cornelissen, 2004), and by so doing this process evokes a presentational alteration. As such, in a metaphorical relationship depicted in a collage, one image fragment acts as the topic (i.e. image A) and another image fragment as the vehicle (i.e. image B) (Cornelissen, 2004). Within this metaphorical relationship, the vehicle (B) transfers its properties, relations and/or metaphorical meanings to the topic (A) and by doing so, the vehicle not only changes the normal form of the topic but also invites the topic to be seen in terms of the vehicle (A is B) (Kaplan, 1990). The specification of the topic and the vehicle is based on the collagist's elaborations regarding the associations, themes, ideas and texts that are presented in his/her collage work, and on the interpretations of the juxtapositions and the body of a collage (see stages 1 and 2) (Vaughan, 2005; cf. Lynn & Lea, 2005).

After the specification of the parts of metaphor (that is the topic and the vehicle of a collage's visual metaphorical relationship), the interpretation of the meaning of the visual metaphor follows. The meaning of a collage's visual metaphor can be comprehended in light of the constitutive principles of metaphor as proposed and described by Cornelissen (2004). According to Cornelissen (2004), the meaning of a metaphor arises in the development and elaboration of the blending that takes place between the information that the topic and the vehicle import into the blend. As such, the meaning of the visual metaphor is emergent and constitutes a 'composition of a new meaning' (Cornelissen, 2004, p. 712) that can be found only in the interaction that takes place between the topic and the vehicle (that is the interactive process of seeing-as). Therefore, through this process the metaphorical inferences become insightful, which in turn assist researchers to generate associations as well as to synthesize the disparate meanings of the images posted on a collage surface (Feinstein, 1982). In Collage 2b (Figure 19.3) this process of analysing a collage's metaphorical relationship is depicted.

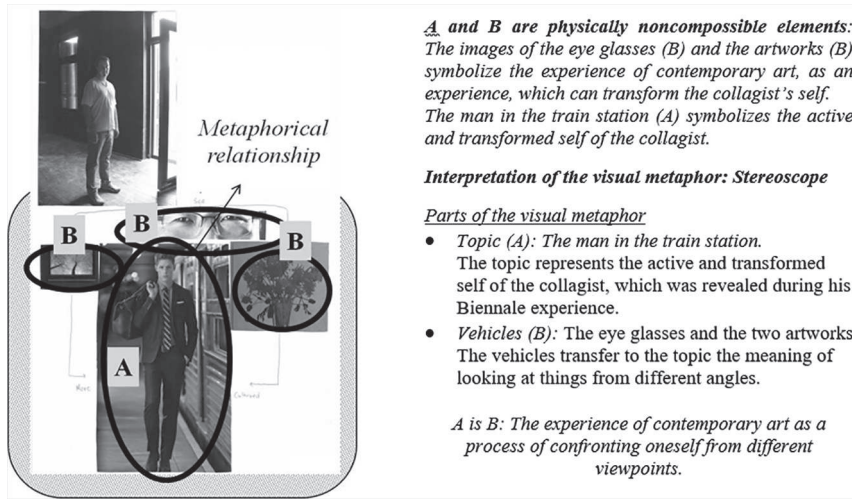


Figure 19.3 Collage 2b: Analysis of a collage's metaphorical relationship

Particularly, in Collage 2b the collagist juxtaposed the images of eye glasses, the two artworks and the man in the train station in order for these images to gain a shared meaning and as such, to inform each other. Within this relationship, the images of eye glasses and the two artworks around the image of the man in the train station are employed by the collagist as the vehicles (B) and the image of the man in the train station as the topic (A). In this proposed visual metaphor, the vehicles (i.e. eye glasses and art paintings) transfer to the topic (i.e. the man in motion) the metaphorical meaning of 'looking at things from different perspectives'. As such, the image of the man in motion is conceived by its collagist as representing another aspect of himself, an aspect through which the collagist sees himself as having a vision and as being cultured and unique. The metaphorical meaning structure that emerged from Collage 2a was interpreted by the authors as the visual metaphor of stereoscope, which conceptualized the Biennale experience as a process of confronting oneself from different viewpoints. Through the analysis of this metaphorical relationship the authors were able to provide a more vivid and insightful description of how this collagist lived his Biennale experience through the lenses of his multiple identity positions.

CONCLUSION

This chapter had three objectives. The first objective was to illustrate the discrete creative strategies of collages, namely juxtapositions and visual metaphors, through which the methodological and interpretive potential of collage visual data comes into existence. While it has been argued that the heuristic quality of collage visual data stems from these creative strategies (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999; Vaughan, 2005), they have been absent from the process of collage analysis in qualitative research. As such, within this first objective of the chapter we demonstrate why juxtapositions and visual metaphors constitute the discrete creative strategies of collages as well as how these creative strategies enhance the heuristic quality of collage as a representational arts-informed inquiry (Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999).

The second objective of this chapter was to review existing methodologies for analysing visual data in order to argue that there is still a lack of a process of analysis which can capture and interpret the 'interdisciplinary' nature of collages and surface their heuristic quality. Particularly, we consider

Table 19.3 The insights of the different processes in the analysis of collages

<i>Methods</i>						
<i>Collage Ontology</i>	<i>Content analysis</i>	<i>Semiotics</i>	<i>Compositional analysis</i>	<i>Psychoanalysis</i>	<i>Discourse analysis</i>	<i>Heuristic analysis (authors' approach)</i>
<i>Imagery</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Creator's intention</i>	✓					✓
<i>Composition</i>		✓	✓		✓	
<i>Metaphors</i>						✓
<i>Juxtapositions</i>					✓	✓
<i>Body of collage</i>	✓			✓		✓

five proposed methodologies for analysing collage visual data, namely content analysis, semiotics, compositional analysis, psychoanalysis and discourse analysis. We illustrate constraints of each methodology and present an alternative approach of collage analysis that captures the idiosyncrasies of such visual representations (Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999). Table 19.3 summarizes the key insights generated from different methods of collage analysis.

As such, in this chapter, by conceiving the methodological technique of collage as a representational art form of inquiry, we suggest that the analysis of collage representations should also involve the identification and investigation of the body of a collage, its juxtapositions and its visual metaphors. The explicit process of collage analysis presented in this chapter can not only aid theorists and researchers in their use and analysis of collage data but can also complement other methodologies that have been proposed in the literature for analysing collages (for example semiotic analysis). Moreover, the presented process of collage analysis by providing a detailed explication and analysis of collage visual data demonstrates how juxtapositions and visual metaphors work on a collage surface. It has been shown that the metaphorical associations evolving from a collage's juxtapositions can be operationalized as parts of metaphor, and this operationalization can be based on informants' interpretation of their collages and in relation to the identification of the juxtapositions and the body that

characterize each collage (cf. Lynn & Lea, 2005). Heuristic analysis embraces the idiosyncrasies of collage visual data and offers insights into the (imaginative) processes behind the creation of collages. It opens up the reading of collage 'to a more embodied, intuitive and dynamic interpretation' (Butler-Kisber et al., 2003, p. 133), which can enhance its potential for providing different ways of knowing and understanding in management research.

As discussed above, collage arts-informed inquiry creates new forms of understanding and elicits multiple narratives that capture individuals' inner worlds. Viewed in this light, it can be employed by management and organizational studies that aim at extending the epistemological foundations of management and organizational knowledge (Bell & Davidson, 2013) and offer insights into organizational processes and practices through the exploration of the spatially and temporally (dis)organized nature of identity (Bell & Davidson, 2013; Belova, 2010; cf. Obodaru, 2012). Hence, collages may serve as a methodological tool into the epistemological research stream of narrative temporality (Cunliffe et al., 2004). Further, collages could be employed in organizational identity studies as well as in leadership studies, in order to provide rich insights into the multi-vocal and multifaceted organizational sense-making processes (Latham, 2014; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014) and 'mark a greater intimacy with daily truths' (Hoffman, 1989, p. 13) of organizational life.

REFERENCES

- Ahuvia, A. C. (2005) 'Beyond the extended self: Loved objects and consumers' identity narratives', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32 (June): 171–84.
- Bahl, S. and Milne, G. R. (2010) 'Talking to ourselves: A dialogical exploration of consumption experiences', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37 (June): 176–94.
- Bal, M. and Bryson, N. (1991) 'Semiotics and art history', *The Art Bulletin*, 73(2): 174–208.
- Ball, M. and Smith, G. (1992) *Analyzing Visual Data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Belk, R., Ger, G. and Askegaard, S. (2003) 'The fire of desire: A multi-sited inquiry into consumer passion', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 30(3): 326–51.
- Bell, E. and Davison, J. (2013) 'Visual management studies: Empirical and theoretical approaches', *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15(2): 167–84.
- Belova, O. (2010) 'Polyphony and the sense of self in flexible organizations', *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 26(1), 67–76.
- Berelson, B. (1952) *Content Analysis in Communication Research*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Boddy, C. R. (2005) 'Projective techniques in market research: Valueless subjectivity or insightful reality?', *International Journal of Market Research*, 47(3): 239–54.
- Boxenbaum, E. and Rouleau, L. (2011) 'New knowledge products as bricolage: Metaphors and scripts in organizational theory', *Academy of Management Review* 36(2): 272–96.
- Brockelman, T. P. (2001) *The Frame and the Mirror: On Collage and the Postmodern*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Butler-Kisber, L. (2002) 'Artful portrayals in qualitative inquiry: The road to found poetry and beyond', *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 48(3): 229–39.
- Butler-Kisber, L. (2007) 'Collage as analysis and representation in qualitative inquiry', in J. G. Knowles, A. L. Cole, L. Neilsen and T. C. Luciani (eds), *The Art of Visual Inquiry*. Halifax, Canada: Backalong, pp. 265–80.
- Butler-Kisber, L. (2008) 'Collage as inquiry', in J. G. Knowles and A. L. Cole (eds), *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research*. CA: Sage, pp. 265–76.
- Butler-Kisber, L. (2010) *Qualitative Inquiry: Thematic, Narrative, and Arts-Informed Perspectives*. London: Sage.
- Butler-Kisber, L. and Poldma, T. (2010) 'The power of visual approaches in qualitative inquiry: The use of collage making and concept mapping in experiential research', *Journal of Research Practice*, 6(2): 1–16.
- Butler-Kisber, L., Allnutt, S., Furlini, L., Kronish, N., Markus, P., Poldma, T. and Stewart, M. (2003) 'Insight and voice: Artful analysis in qualitative inquiry', *Arts and Learning Research Journal*, 19(1): 127–65.
- Cambre, M.-C. (2013) 'Immanence and collage heuristics', *Visual Arts Research*, 39(1): 70–89.
- Carroll, N. (2003) *Beyond Aesthetics: Philosophical Essays*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Clements, R. D. (1982) 'Metaphor in art education', *Art Education*, 35(5): 28–31.
- Cornelissen, J. P. (2004) 'What are we playing at? Theatre, organization, and the use of metaphor', *Organization Studies*, 25(5): 705–26.
- Cornelissen, J. P. (2005) 'Beyond compare: Metaphor in organization theory', *Academy of Management Review*, 30(4): 751–64.
- Cornelissen, J. P., Kafouros, M. and Lock, A. R. (2005) 'Metaphorical images of organization: How organizational researchers develop and select organizational metaphors', *Human Relations*, 58(12): 1545–78.
- Costa, A. I. A., Schoolmeester, D., Dekker, M. and Jongen, W. M. F. (2003) 'Exploring the use of consumer collages in product design', *Trends in Food Science and Technology*, 14(1–2): 17–31.
- Cunliffe, A. L., Luhman, J. T. and Boje, D. M. (2004) 'Narrative temporality: Implications for organizational research', *Organization Studies*, 25(2): 261–86.
- Davis, D. (2008) 'Collage inquiry: Creative and particular applications', *LEARNING Landscapes*, 2(1): 245–65.
- Davis, D. and Butler-Kisber, L. (1999) 'Arts-based representation in qualitative research: Collage as a contextualizing analytic strategy'. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada.
- Deleuze, G. (2000) *Proust and Signs*. Tr. R. Howard. London: Athlone.

- Donoghue, S. (2000) 'Projective techniques in consumer research', *Journal of Family Ecology and Consumer Sciences*, 28(1): 47–53.
- du Preez, E. and Roos, V. (2008) 'The development of counsellor identity: A visual expression', *South African Journal of Psychology*, 38(4): 699–709.
- Eco, U. (1995) 'Metaphor', in M. Dascal, D. Gerhardus, K. Lorenz and G. Meggle (eds), *Philosophy of Language. An International Handbook of Contemporary Research*, 2 vol. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, pp. 1313–23.
- Eisner, E. (2008) 'Art and knowledge', in J. G. Knowles and A. L. Cole (eds), *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples, and Issues*. London: Sage, pp. 3–12.
- El Refaie, E. (2003) 'Understanding visual metaphor: The example of newspaper cartoons', *Visual Communication*, 2(1): 75–95.
- Feinstein, H. (1982) 'Meaning and visual metaphor', *Studies in Art Education*, 23(2): 45–55.
- Foss, S. K. (1994) 'A rhetorical schema for the evaluation of visual imagery', *Communication Studies*, 45(3–4): 213–24.
- Foster, H. (2004) *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Garoian, C. and Gaudelius, Y. (2008) *Spectacle Pedagogy: Art, Politics, and Visual Culture*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Hamrouni, A. D. and Touzi, M. (2011) 'Technique of collage for store design atmospherics', *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 14(3): 304–23.
- Havlena, W. J. and Holak, S. L. (1996) 'Exploring nostalgia imagery through the use of consumer collages', in *Advances in Consumer Research*, 23: 35–42.
- Hermans, H. J. M., Kempen, H. and van Loon, R. (1992) 'The dialogical self: Beyond individualism and rationalism', *American Psychologist*, 47(1): 23–33.
- Hoffman, K. (1989) 'Collage in the twentieth century: An overview', in K. Hoffman (ed.), *Collage: Critical Views*. Ann Arbor, MI: Umi Research Press, pp. 1–37.
- Hogg, M. K., Bruce, M. and Hill, A. J. (1999) 'Brand recognition and young consumers', in *Advances in Consumer Research*, 26: 671–74.
- Jeffers, C. S. (1996) 'Experiencing art through metaphor', *Art Education*, 49(3): 6–11.
- Jewitt, C. and Oyama, R. (2001) 'Visual meaning: A social semiotic approach', in C. Jewitt and T. van Leeuwen (eds), *Handbook of Visual Analysis*. London: Sage, pp. 134–56.
- Kaplan, S. J. (1990) 'Visual metaphors in the representation of communication technology', *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 7(1): 37–47.
- Khatena, J. and Khatena, N. (1990) 'Metaphor motifs and creative imagination in art', *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity*, 5(1): 21–34.
- Kilgard, A. K. (2009) 'Collage: A paradigm for performance studies', *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies*, 5(3): 1–19.
- Kjellman-Chapin, M. (2006) 'Traces, layers and palimpsests: The dialogics of collage and pastiche', *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift/Journal of Art History*, 75(2): 86–99.
- Koll, O., Von Wallpach, S. and Kreuzer, M. (2010) 'Multi-method research on consumer-brand associations: Comparing free associations, storytelling, and collages', *Psychology and Marketing*, 27(6): 584–602.
- Kress, G. R. and van Leeuwen, T. (1996) *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge.
- Kuspit, D. (1989) 'Collage: The organizing principle of art in the age of the relativity of art', in K. Hoffman (ed.), *Collage: Critical Views*. Ann Arbor, MI: Umi Research Press, pp. 39–57.
- Labbo, L. D. (1996) 'A semiotic analysis of young children's symbol making in a classroom computer center', *Reading Research Quarterly*, 31(4): 356–85.
- Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. (1980) *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Latham, S. D. (2014) 'Leadership research: An arts-informed perspective', *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 23(2): 123–32.
- Liao, C. (2013) 'Art medium too: Avatar, art, and assemblages', *Journal of Virtual Worlds Research*, 6(2): 1–15.
- Lorimer, H. (2005) 'Cultural geography: The busyness of being "more-than-representational"', *Progress in Human Geography*, 29(1): 83–94.
- Lorimer, J. (2010) 'Moving image methodologies for more-than-human geographies', *Cultural Geographies*, 17(2): 237–58.
- Lynn, N. and Lea, S. J. (2005) 'Through the looking glass: Considering the challenges

- visual methodologies raise for qualitative research', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2(3): 213–25.
- MacKenzie, S. and Wolf, M. (2012) 'Layering self(f)ves: Finding acceptance, community and praxis through collage', *The Qualitative Report*, 17(31): 1–21.
- Maitlis, S. and Christianson, M. (2014) 'Sense-making in organizations: Taking stock and moving forward', *The Academy of Management Annals*, 8(1): 57–125.
- Mannay, D. (2010) 'Making the familiar strange: Can visual research methods render the familiar setting more perceptible?', *Qualitative Research*, 10(1): 91–111.
- Markham, A. N. (2005), 'Go ugly early: Fragmented narrative and bricolage as interpretive method', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(6): 813–39.
- Marshall, J. (2005) 'Connecting art, learning, and creativity: A case for curriculum integration', *Studies in Art Education*, 46(3): 227–41.
- Marshall, J. (2008) 'Visible thinking: Using contemporary art to teach conceptual skills', *Art Education*, 61(2): 38–45.
- Mitchell, C., Theron, L., Stuart, J., Smith, A. and Campbell, Z. (2011) 'Drawings as research method', in L. Theron, C. Mitchell, A. L. Smith and J. Stuart (eds), *Picturing Research*. Rotterdam/Boston/Taipei: Sense Publishers, pp. 19–36.
- Norris, J. (2008) 'Collage', in L. M. Given (ed.), *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. London: Sage, pp. 95–8.
- Obodaru, O. (2012) 'The self not taken: How alternative selves develop and how they influence our professional lives', *Academy of Management Review*, 37(1): 34–57.
- Pachler, P. (2010) *How Collages Reveal Your Deepest Thoughts*. Norderstedt, Germany: GRIN Verlag.
- Phillips, B. J. and McQuarrie, E. F. (2004) 'Beyond visual metaphor: A new typology of visual rhetoric in advertising', *Marketing Theory*, 4(1–2): 113–36.
- Poldma, T. and Stewart, M. (2004) 'Understanding the value of artistic tools such as visual concept maps in design and education research', *Art, Design and Communication in Higher Education*, 3(3): 141–48.
- Pratt, M. G. and Foreman, P. O. (2000) 'Classifying managerial responses to multiple organizational identities', *Academy of Management Review*, 25(1): 18–42.
- Raaberg, G. (1998) 'Beyond fragmentation: Collage as feminist strategy in the arts', *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, 31(3): 153–71.
- Rolling, J. H. Jr. (2010) 'A paradigm analysis of arts-based research and implications for education', *Studies in Art Education*, 51(2): 102–14.
- Rose, G. (2001) *Visual Methodologies*. London: Sage.
- Rosenberg, H. (1989) 'Collage: Philosophy of put-togethers', in K. Hoffman (ed.), *Collage: Critical Views*. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, pp. 91–120.
- Simons, H. and McCormack, B. (2007) 'Integrating arts-based inquiry in evaluation methodology opportunities and challenges', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13(2): 292–311.
- Springgay, S., Irwin, R. L. and Kind, S. W. (2005) 'A/r/tography as living inquiry through art and text', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(6): 897–912.
- Stake, R. E. (2005) 'Qualitative case studies', in N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd edn). London: Sage, pp. 443–66.
- Stokes, C. (1982) 'Collage as jokework: Freud's theories of wit as the foundation for the collages of Max Ernst', *Leonardo*, 15(3): 199–204.
- Taylor, B. (2004) *Collage: The Making of Contemporary Art*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Taylor, S. S. and Ladkin, D. (2009) 'Understanding arts-based methods in managerial development', *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 8(1): 55–69.
- Vannini, P. (2015) 'Non-representational research methodologies. An introduction', in P. Vannini (ed.), *Non-Representational Methodologies: Re-Envisioning Research* (Vol. 12). London: Routledge, pp. 1–18.
- Van Schalkwyk, G. J. (2010) 'Collage life story elicitation technique: A representational technique for scaffolding autobiographical memories', *The Qualitative Report*, 15(3): 675–95.
- Vaughan, K. (2005) 'Pieced together: Collage as an artist's method for interdisciplinary research', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 4(1): 1–21.

Qualitative Research through Documentary Filmmaking: Questions and Possibilities

Rachel Morgan, Annilee M. Game and
Natasha Slutskeya

INTRODUCTION

The aspiration to capture, revisit and review reality has always been a driving force for both science and art (Gaines & Renov, 1999). The search for visible evidence and attempts to document the world also underpin the origins of the documentary tradition. Documentary has a direct, multi-sensory impact (Spencer, 2011) and this has led to a dual quest to develop documentary as a way of taking hold of reality and as a new form of social persuasion (Nichols, 2016). Recently, rapidly emerging new media technologies have triggered increased interest and a reworking of the documentary field (Hight & Harindranath, 2014; Nash et al., 2014).

The growing impact and importance of documentaries have been recognized in the academic sphere. Indeed, academics increasingly use filmmaking to generate and disseminate knowledge (Rakić & Chambers, 2010). While the use of documentaries as a resource for research remains a subject of debate – with concerns related to the potential for political

bias, possible lack of academic rigour and likely difficulties in combining documentaries with other forms of academic evidence (Belk, 2011) – there is some consensus that documentaries are a valuable and extremely under-utilized source of material for researchers (Belk, 2011).

In this chapter we explore the practical potentialities and challenges of using documentary films to enrich the academic research process. The discussion begins with a brief overview of ‘documentary’ as a broad genre, considering the reasons for its growing popularity. Next, we reflect upon the use of documentary for research. We then present strengths and limitations of different approaches to filmmaking and consider how they might be applied in management and organizational research. This is followed by a discussion of how film can be used and analysed as data in the field of management. At the end of the chapter we provide some practical recommendations for researchers

to consider before setting out to incorporate documentaries into their projects.

DOCUMENTARIES: DEFINITIONS AND CONTEXT

The genre of documentary film has developed and expanded during the last 100 years, and advances have recently been accelerated by the development of inexpensive video capturing and editing technology (Belk, 2011). While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to review in detail, scholars have discussed different stages in the history of the development of documentary from the earliest cinema documentaries, to observational documentaries initiated by new television opportunities and demands, and now digital documentary driven by emerging technologies and the need for new documentary forms (Ellis, 2012; Nash et al., 2014).

Documentary, however loose and inexact a category, broadly involves an attempt to represent reality rather than to imagine its possible alternatives (Nichols, 2016), or to translate realities of the world onto the screen (Ellis, 2012). Documentary films are often perceived as ‘a creative treatment of actuality’ as they are expected to reflect something factual or specific, depicting people, places and events. Documentary styles range from more traditional formats that capture histories and biographies, peculiarities and particularities of human behaviour and emotional dimensions of individual experiences, to what is described by scholars as docudrama (dramatic enactment or re-enactment of a historic event) and reality videos (Corner, 1996; Hampe, 1997). Documentary films can be produced with different goals in mind including providing information and increased understanding; interest and sympathy for the subjects; challenging dominant social systems; and putting across oppositional views (Corner, 1996; Hampe, 1997). For its advocates, not only can documentary function as a

colossal collection of faces, places and events but it also possesses huge technical power to achieve persuasive rhetorical engagement (Nichols, 2016).

Although filmmakers differ significantly in their approaches to the making of documentaries and in their beliefs of how to represent reality – with some permitting events to unfold in front of their cameras while others choose to reconstruct events and to guide their participants – what makes documentary films fascinating is their provocative nature in relation to truth and realism (Ellis, 2012; Gaines & Renov, 1999). Scholars in the field of film studies have reflected on different modes of documentary representation, given that the reality exposed in films is observed yet also constructed. Researchers have raised concerns regarding whether the resemblance of reality can produce legitimate forms of knowledge and whether it could be read as a form of evidence of the real (Nichols, 2016). They have also drawn attention to the fact that documentary reality is multidimensional; it allows different contributions and forms of collaboration and participation (e.g. between filmmakers and government agencies and/or between filmmakers and their subjects), therefore, reality never lies within the image alone but always in the discursive field around it (Ellis, 2012; Nichols, 2016). Finally, scholars in the field of documentary are increasingly occupied with the potential of documentary to replace representation with evocation. Scholars have begun to interrogate whether documentary films are equipped to afford a new form of truth – a truth which is not unshakeable but instead more undecided, less fixed (Ellis, 2012).

RESEARCH WITH A FILM CAMERA

The twentieth century witnessed deepening unease with means of knowledge production which persist in reinforcing a subject and object dichotomization. This prompted

exploration of the use of more experimental research tools in social sciences (Corner, 1996). There have been repeated calls from within social scientific communities to challenge the position of the researcher as a disinterested outside observer; to create more equal relationships between researchers and participants; to empower marginalized and vulnerable groups through research; and to consider the 'justice' of research by questioning who benefits from the outcomes of research projects (de Lange et al., 2008). The urgent need to respond to these calls has drawn scholars' attention to such qualities of documentary as its capacity to witness social events, to present society to itself, to incite a conversation among different spheres of a society, and to reveal and alter existing discourses and understandings – all qualities which are seen as enabling delivery of new forms of truth. Hence, scholars' consideration of documentaries might arguably indicate a critical response to the growing scepticism directed at more traditional forms of knowledge generation (Corner, 1996).

Researchers in different disciplines have explored the possibilities of incorporating filmmaking in research design (Rakić & Chambers, 2010). For example, filmmaking has been widely used by anthropologists, visual sociologists and geographers, as well as in educational, tourism and health research, to name but a few. The use of documentaries in academic research has been both praised and criticized. Advocates commend documentary for its humanism, for the collaborative nature of the relationships between researcher and subject and its commitment to long-term immersion in the project as the precondition of its representation (Grimshaw, 2002). Critics of documentary condemn it for oversimplification and manipulation of data (Grimshaw, 2002). Indeed, the use of filmmaking in research projects has provoked a wide range of debate with some qualitative researchers believing that objectifying the realism of documentary might undermine efforts to represent the multiplicity (and often

incommensurability) of different realities (Rakić & Chambers, 2010).

Scholars are still working out how these two categories (research and documentary) can intersect in order for them to deliver mutual benefits. To facilitate the integration of the two categories, researchers have discussed the commonalities and differences between the research process and the process of filmmaking (Goodman, 2004). For example, Goodman (2004) has summarized his personal experiences of being both a researcher and a filmmaker and has identified a number of similar steps integral to both processes. Similarities include: stating the question such that it provides focus and creates excitement and interest in the given area; planning the design; using similar techniques for data collection (for example, participant observation and interviews); and engaging with data analysis and interpretation. Additionally, both researchers and filmmakers rely on individuals' perspectives to gather data or to tell a story. As such, all the strengths and weaknesses of relying on narratives as a source of data affect both the research and filming processes (Goodman, 2004).

The methods of obtaining rich insights from interviews are similar in qualitative research and filmmaking. In both research and filmmaking, it is essential to encourage participants to tell their stories, to avoid leading questions and – while there is always a checklist of questions to refer to – it is especially important to follow up on unanticipated, surprising or contradictory comments made by participants (Hampe, 1997). Goodman (2004) further highlights that, unsurprisingly, data analysis in research projects is not far removed from film editing – the process which entails both systematic assessment and creative interpretation. Although Goodman (2004) also remarks on crucial dissimilarities between documentary and research (comprising different goals and different forms of documenting events and recording data), he concludes that researchers and filmmakers

have a lot to learn from each other and could unquestionably deliver mutual benefits. In the next section we present some current examples of how the documentary format is used in business- and management-related disciplines in order to illustrate how documentary has been applied by the field so far.

DOCUMENTARIES IN MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESEARCH

The use of the documentary format in management research remains limited. However, the growing reliance of the field on a wider range of methodological tools to capture multiple dimensions of social phenomena (e.g. interest in the affective aspects of interactions at work and in the materiality of work practices), and increased attention to the development of sensitive and participative methodologies (e.g. participatory research and action research), means that organizational and management researchers are well-placed to incorporate documentaries into their research designs.

Existing uses of documentaries in management and organizational research can be divided into three broad areas: 1) using pre-existing documentaries for investigative purposes; 2) new documentary-making that is used as a research tool to facilitate data elicitation and/or dissemination; and 3) producing documentaries for educational purposes. There are also limited examples of exploring the potential of documentaries to offer a critical re-imagining of problematic institutions, and an emergent interest in ethnographic video and filmmaking (see Smets et al., 2014).

Scholars, especially in the fields of labour history, industrial relations and studies of work, have relied on existing documentaries to gain insights into daily practices and rhythms of work and life from the past (Brigden, 2005). Documentary film analysis has been used by researchers to advance their understanding of labour processes,

industrial disputes and the working lives of those involved in changing industries or occupations (Brigden, 2005). Documentaries have also been incorporated in scholarly research in order to demonstrate that wider audiences should be involved in tackling industrial concerns, and that responses to moral issues are needed at individual, company and public policy levels. For example, by comparing Kopple's (1990) documentary *American Dream* to Moore's (1989) *Roger & Me*, Orvell (1995) drew attention to the predicament of workers whose jobs were outsourced to cheaper overseas labour.

The use of pre-existing visual documentaries as a resource for research, both contemporary and historic, is also pertinent to consumption studies, macromarketing studies (Belk, 2011), and to critical marketing and transformative consumer research (Tadajewski & Hamilton, 2014). So far researchers have relied on both dramatized films and documentaries in their analyses of the marketplace. For example, Holbrook (2006) studied trade-offs between art and commercialization using dramatized films about jazz musicians. In a similar vein, Tadajewski and Hamilton (2014) highlighted the importance of transformative consumer research by linking two documentaries about the hazards stemming from various waste disposal practices. In their article, Tadajewski and Hamilton (2014) demonstrate the documentaries' potential to invite consumers to reflect upon the moral and ethical implications of their buying decisions, to revisit their consumption patterns and to 'self-correct' their consumption behaviour. More importantly, documentary films are valuable in reducing what Bauman (1991) describes as 'moral distance' between us and the consequences of what we do as it offers us convincing visual evidence of our misdoings (Tadajewski & Hamilton, 2014). Finally, McDonagh and Brereton (2010) demonstrated the importance of considering representations of the marketplace in films for macromarketing scholarship.

When filming was first incorporated in management research, it was often in the service of documenting common organizational routines and practices. For example, workplace studies have engaged with such organizational settings as surgical operations, control centres, surveillance rooms, medical consultations and financial trading rooms (Heath et al., 2010). Recently organizational scholars have commented on the increasing number of ethnographic films used in research projects. Filming is used when researchers need to attend to multiple discrete sites (Smets et al., 2014). Ethnographers advocate a 'technically mediated presence' through filming for studies which involve online worlds, electronic trading or remote working (Smets et al., 2014). It has been accepted among management scholars that the use of filming enhances researchers' presence in the field (Clarke, 2011; Heath & Hindmarsh, 2002; LeBaron, 2008). Fewer studies have used ethnographic documentaries, however. Those studies that do exist use documentaries to enhance trust and improve communication between researchers and participants, triggering a richer exploration of participants' experiences, in turn strengthening theoretical insights and the practical impact of the research (e.g. Slutskaya et al., in press).

There has been an increasing interest in exploring the potential of documentaries in business and management education. Previous studies have demonstrated effectively how management educators can include discussions and examples from films and documentaries to illustrate such concepts as work-life balance (Cebula and Comer, 2007), organizational culture and diversity (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2004; Holbrook, 2009; Huczynski & Buchanan, 2004; Smith, 2009), and also to stimulate students' interest in issues surrounding ethical decision making and sustainability (Comer & Holbrook, 2011). Researchers have noted that video cases work especially

well to document interpersonal behaviour by emphasizing a more realistic complexity than traditional written cases. For example, Comer and Holbrook (2011) turned to documentaries on the making of music albums for teaching key management concepts comprising intragroup conflict, group cohesiveness, task and maintenance roles, norms and group effectiveness. The film was used to demonstrate the complex dynamics of group interactions in the process of product development. Comer and Holbrook (2011) argue that management students are likely to respond favourably to the use of documentaries as they often contain real life examples and insights into individual experiences. In another example, visual footage of actual, in situ practices in complex environments was used to explore ways of engendering practitioner reflexivity (see Carroll et al., 2008). This approach endorses the use of films for educational purposes as it helps overcome the simplifications characteristic of simulation exercises and exposes learner-practitioners to the complexity of real interactions, in ways that suit and benefit their own learning focus, style and pace (Boud & Miller, 1996).

In sum, the interest in documentaries in the field of management is present and increasing in response to the need for richer data which adds new multi-sensory dimensions to knowledge. There is also a long-standing invitation to management scholars to share their insights with wider audiences. Documentary offers great potential to reach non-traditional audiences, beyond the confines of academia (Slutskaya et al., in press). However, there is still limited discussion of how documentaries can be included in management research, and which approaches to filmmaking could be considered as the most useful or appropriate. Below, to assist researchers in selecting the most appropriate approach, we outline alternative documentary approaches and discuss how other scholars have used these forms to date.

KEY APPROACHES TO DOCUMENTARY-MAKING

From the above discussion it is clear that depending on the nature, goals and findings of a research project researchers may sometimes choose different approaches to producing or incorporating a documentary as part of their research design. In this section we therefore look in more depth at five distinct documentary-making methods which might be adopted by management scholars seeking to make a documentary. The main approaches include the expository approach, the observational approach, the participatory approach, the reflexive approach and the performative approach. Below we examine the forms and conventions of each approach, reflecting upon their respective strengths, limitations and utility for the field of management. Table 20.1 summarizes the discussion.

Expository Approach

Documentary filmmakers adopting the expository approach focus on ideas which underpin the message of the film (Nichols, 2010). Filmmakers grounded in this approach tend to convey the message in an instructive form (Nichols, 2010), often excluding the audience from participating in the production of meaning – the message is communicated to the audience rather than being co-produced intentionally. In other words, filmmakers set out to convey already existing information in a new way, emphasizing the message of their choice (DeGaudio, 1997). As a result, filmmakers are in control and a voiceover is often the main form of sound present. Additionally, images are carefully manipulated and ordered to further support delivery of the message. For example, within *Eyes on the Prize* (a PBS documentary series about the American Civil Rights Movement), during a fight between teenagers, a voiceover is used (the word fear) in conjunction with an image of a frightened person's face (Cagle,

2012). *Eyes on the Prize* further demonstrates how within the expository approach the voice of a social actor could be used together with actuality footage, conditional on the narration taking a clear objectivist stance (Cagle, 2012).

The expository approach can also be combined with some poetic (emotional) elements. For example, specific images might be used to produce certain moods in the audience (Nichols, 2010). Thus in Gideon Koppels' *sleep furiously* (2008) (a documentary showing the lives of people in Trefeurig, Wales), the filmmaker focuses on incorporating images of peaceful country roads to evade a direct portrayal of the hardship felt by the individuals (Waldron, 2014). Furthermore, expressive techniques such as music and flashbacks could be used as poetic elements in order to strengthen the impact of the message being delivered by the documentary maker (Nichols, 2010). Referring to the previous example, in *sleep furiously*, the filmmaker also uses a soundtrack, combined with panning of the landscape to direct the audience's attention towards the importance of the main character's personal relationship with the village (Waldron, 2014).

The overall aim of this approach tends to be prescriptive so it could be usefully applied as a communicative tool. Within organizational research, it could be used to portray to audiences, including employees, the nature of changes to organizational policies (for example, new procedures for monitoring and reporting ethical breaches). However, a number of concerns have been raised over this approach, including limits to the accuracy of the message and the fairness of representation that may arise from lack of collaboration in the production stages. Due to the authoritative position of the filmmaker, historical and contextual accuracy also may be questioned (Nichols, 2010). This approach might also result in lack of trust between the audience and the filmmaker as the filmmaker claims instructive dominance over the viewer (Nichols, 2010).

Table 20.1 Comparison of approaches to documentary-making

	<i>Expository</i>	<i>Observational</i>	<i>Participatory</i>	<i>Reflexive</i>	<i>Performative</i>
Aim	To inform and move audiences	To present untampered footage of people's everyday lives	To inform through interactions and engagement	To show how knowledge is socially and formally constructed	To show knowledge as embodied by focusing on subjective and affective dimensions
Sound	Voiceover, expressive	Generated through voice and movement of participants	Dialogue between the participant and filmmaker (often in the form of interviews)	Voiceover explaining the self-reflexive nature of the footage	Filmmaker's voice prevalent, music, sound and interviews are commonly used
Image	Manipulated to support delivery of message	Pure images, filmed as they really are	Can be a combination of manipulated and pure images	Can be a combination of manipulated and pure images	Strong performances from actors, manipulated images
Strengths	Easy to follow, message is clearly conveyed, filmmaker has full control so less time and costs involved	Increases transparency, audience can construct their own meanings	Both filmmakers and participants have partial control, can challenge historical footage	Challenges notions of reality, allows audience to make informed assumptions about the message	Acknowledges the complexity of knowledge, focuses on personal experience and emotions, audience can feel what it is like to be in a certain social position
Limitations	Unfair representation, full control of the filmmaker questioning accuracy of the message, ethical concern of viewers' trust	Omits historical context, ethical concern presents itself if through their non-existent role, the filmmaker disregards harm to participants	Loss of independent judgement on behalf of the filmmaker, pressure or manipulation from filmmaker towards participant, subjectivity often goes unquestioned	Pressure from filmmaker towards participant to represent their point of view, focus is drawn away from social issues towards construction of knowledge	The filmmaker's point of view may be far from societal norms, people or issues may be misrepresented, possibility of exaggeration
Examples of potential use in management research	Research to inform audiences of management policy changes in organizations	Research to reveal the everyday experiences of an 'unseen' occupation, for example hotel cleaners	Research to enhance understanding of motivation in organizations, through a collaboration between filmmaker and managers	Research on social inequalities in organizations. Researchers can include their own reflexive narrative to contextualize the film	Research to convey the emotive experiences of employees who are a minority within a particular industry

Observational Approach

Contrasting with the expository approach, an observational approach understands knowledge as created through watching, listening to and observing others. This documentary approach aims at democratizing and humanizing the filmmaking process (Grimshaw, 2002); it also challenges a number of academic and filmmaking conventions and traditional power relations. Observational film is argued to increase transparency by 'capturing untampered events in the everyday lives of popular people' (Nichols, 1988, p. 48). The filmmaker has much less control in this approach and sound is generated from the voices and movements of participants (Nichols, 2010). The subjects being filmed interact with one another, with the intention that they are unaffected by the filmmaker's presence (Nichols, 2010). Alpert (2013) discusses some examples of the observational approach adopted by Sergei Loznitsa, a Russian filmmaker aiming to 'show problems in the Soviet Union' (Alpert, 2013, p. 135). To deliver his message Loznitsa focuses on the image. His documentaries are free from sound and characters do not make any political claims. They endeavour to provide a candid representation of marginalized groups without openly articulated political concerns contaminating the visual images. In this way, he attempts to reduce his influence on the production of meanings. Such an approach invites the audience to construct their own perspectives on what is shown in the film.

In such an approach, potential hierarchies are removed. That is to say, there is no designated director, the key themes are decided by participants, and there is an alignment between the interests of a filmmaker and participants (Grimshaw, 2002). The approach does not rely on voiceover or interviews (Lashua, 2010). No music or sound effects are used nor 'historical reenactments' (Nichols, 2010, p. 172). Often, extra steps are taken to enhance the authenticity of experiences captured by the films. For example, use of the minimum necessary

recording equipment with very few people involved in shooting reduces the influence of the camera on behaviour; this, along with editing undertaken only by those who were present at the film shooting, means misrepresentations of captured phenomena can be avoided (Grimshaw, 2002). An observational approach could be used within management research to explore the experiences of employees in 'unseen' occupations, such as hotel cleaners, and to help illuminate employee concerns.

Some scholars remain doubtful about observational cinema, however, highlighting that such films isolate discrete events and deprive viewers of a broader historical context that might shape them (Nichols, 2010). According to these scholars, the focus on realistic representation might stall further scrutiny of social phenomena. Additionally, allowing subjects to revisit and relive their painful and dramatic experiences might result in their physical and emotional distress or harm (Nichols, 2010). The descriptor 'observational' is sometimes mistakenly interpreted by scholars as an attempt at 'objectification' which is seen as inconsistent with the original phenomenological stance of this approach (Grimshaw, 2002). The supposed realism of the observational approach has been queried by more sceptical scholars and filmmakers due to the strong influence of the camera on human behaviour (McCarty, 1995).

There are further practical challenges associated with this approach. For example, in order for the approach to achieve its goals, a close relationship between filmmaker and participant must be formed (Young, 1995); yet this may be difficult to achieve in practice, especially when perceived status differences between researchers and participants are large. Moreover, concerns have been raised regarding the complexity of managing the relationship between reflecting upon experiences from within and efforts to represent them.

Participatory Approach

The participatory approach shows knowledge as learnt from interactions, generally in the form of interviews (Nichols, 2010). This approach was generated to counteract a key criticism of observational film – that is, the neutrality of the message presented (McDonald, 2007). The overall focus of the participatory approach is engagement and participation; hence, it is characterized by dialogue between the participant and researcher/filmmaker (Nichols, 2010). Sound exchange takes place between a subject and the filmmaker in the form of conversation, reinforcing the participatory nature of the approach (Nichols, 2010). As such, the representative voice of the film is less distinguishable (Nichols, 1988). Nichols (2010) highlights that filmmakers using interviews often discuss content before it is filmed. In this respect, the filmmaker only has partial control over the content (Nichols, 2010). Nonetheless, filmmakers are still able to influence the perspective shown on camera. This approach allows a contemporary critique of historical footage, ‘without challenging assumptions of the footage as a voice-over might’ (Nichols, 1988, p. 54).

An example of the participatory approach is Parr’s (2007) production of an ethnographic film named *Recovering Lives*, aimed at revealing experiences felt by those with mental health problems. In order to adopt a collaborative approach to the filmmaking process, a monthly working group was established whereby joint meanings and understandings were produced between researchers and participants. Parr (2007) found that communicating in formal, structured ways did not suit her project and therefore she had to adapt her understandings and expectations to meet the needs of others involved in the project. All parts of the film, from designing questions to editing and finalizing the film production were completed in collaboration. Participants’ sense of ownership and authorship of the film became crucial for the

success of the project. This approach could be used in management research to further explore and analyse motivational or leadership practices within organizations. Here, a filmmaker and managers and/or employees could collaborate in order to explore the nature and effects of motivational techniques, or leadership styles, as they are perceived and experienced by staff.

The participatory approach has limitations which include loss of independent judgement on behalf of the filmmaker (Nichols, 2010), a lengthier and more time-consuming process and a more uncertain outcome. Additionally, a major concern with a participatory approach is potential pressure or manipulation that participants might experience from the researcher/filmmaker (Nichols, 2010). Furthermore, although interviewees are telling their own stories (Nichols, 1988), interviewers may be tempted to choose participants who agree with their point of view; therefore, the potential for subjective bias in this approach remains a concern (Nichols, 1988). In line with this view, Mathew (2014) argues that using the participatory approach fails to encompass the difficulties involved in portraying complex realities of everyday life.

Reflective Approach

A reflective approach defines knowledge as contextual, ‘always framed by institutional constraints and personal assumptions’ (Nichols, 2010, p. 210). Underpinning the reflective documentary approach is the ‘epistemological assumption that knowledge and the position of self in relation to the mediator of knowledge are socially and formally constructed and should be shown to be so’ (Nichols, 1988, p. 60). Supporting this, DelGaudio (1997, p. 193) states ‘the reflexive mode emphasizes the epistemological doubt inherent in the presentation of scientific theory through the medium of film, directly questioning knowledge’. Lashua (2010) stresses that this approach contests previous

notions of stable, graspable and representable reality. Unlike the previous approaches, the reflective approach reveals details of the filming process to the audience, thus demonstrating how being filmed interferes with the construction and representation of reality. Relevant details which inform constructed meanings are unravelled (Mondada, 2006). Furthermore, this approach queries the notion of realism. For example, *Surname Viet Given Name Nam* (dir. Trinh T. Min-ha, 1989) portrays the oppression of women in Vietnam through interviews; however, within the film it is revealed that interviews were performed by actors and the actors followed a pre-written script (Nichols, 2010).

Reflective documentaries mix observational and interview techniques (Nichols, 1988). A voiceover is often used which clearly shows how the footage is a self-reflective reality, not undeniable truth (Nichols, 1988). In other words, this approach presents two frames of reference: evidential (through observation) and instructive (through the viewpoint of the narrator/filmmaker) (Nichols, 1988). Within management research, this approach could be used to develop insights regarding social inequality issues such as class discrimination, ageism and racism within organizations. A researcher can express the reasons behind their interest in social inequality, as well as how they recruited actors, thus providing a contextualized account of the message being conveyed.

A major concern with this approach is that pressure may be imposed on participants to represent the view of the filmmaker (Nichols, 2010). Furthermore, focus is moved away from social issues themselves due to its emphasis on the constructed view of reality (Nichols, 2010). Nevertheless, such an approach reveals how societal norms and conventions might arguably fashion our understandings of reality (Nichols, 2010). Additionally, showing the audience the process of filmmaking, for example, the staged interviews in *Surname Viet Given Name Nam*, gives viewers an opportunity to reflect upon the validity of the message (Nichols, 2010).

Performative Approach

The performative documentary approach provides an alternative to empirical, factual or abstract forms of knowledge (Nichols, 2010). Here, knowledge is defined as what we learn from experience and is therefore embodied (Nichols, 2010). This approach acknowledges the complexity of knowledge by stressing 'its subjective and affective dimensions' (Nichols, 2010, p. 202). In other words, the performative approach focuses on the emotional dimension of the audience (Swinnen, 2013). The filmmaker's voice is highly prevalent and music, sound and interview dialogue are often used in sync (Nichols, 2010). For example, *Tongues Untied* (dir. Marlon Riggs, 1989), a film aimed at investigating black gay identities, combines an emotive voiceover with strong performances to allow the audience to inhabit the social position of a black, gay male (Nichols, 2010). The core difference between the performative approach and the others is the focus on personal experience and emotions. A performative documentary therefore could be suitable for management research to express emotive experiences felt by a minority group of employees within a particular industry (for example, women in engineering). This approach may help to capture the personal experiences and emotions felt by marginal groups within the workplace, therefore providing valuable insights regarding organizational behaviour.

Typical concerns about the performative approach include the possibility of misrepresentation of people or situations, and the possibility of eccentricity (on the part of the filmmaker) strongly influencing the message conveyed (Nichols, 2010). This approach is personally orientated, in that the filmmaker aims to convey the 'truth of what it feels like to experience the world in a particular way' (Nichols, 2010, p. 211). As a result, it provides an opportunity for less exposed and less visible groups to be seen in unconventional ways (Swinnen, 2013), in turn encouraging audiences to challenge stereotypically

negative connotations (Swinnen, 2013). A central critique of this approach stems from the inclusion of dramatic elements, with some scholars suggesting this potentially undermines the validity of the message (Bruzzi, 2000).

It is important to note that the five approaches outlined above need not be used exclusively – as with traditional ethnographic research it is possible to combine techniques (Henley, 1998). Referring to a previous example, *Eyes on the Prize*, the filmmaker combined a voiceover with interviews, thus mixing the expository approach and participatory approach respectively. Cagle (2012) suggests that by combining approaches, the filmmaker increases the transparency and coherency of the documentary. Indeed, hybrid approaches to filmmaking are common forms of contemporary documentary (Cagle, 2012).

APPROACHES TO DATA ANALYSIS

One of the most significant advantages of using filming as part of the research process is the richness of data collected. Documentary-making generates large volumes of visual and verbal data. The extra richness of data brings both benefits and challenges related to data management and analysis. A clear plan for managing multimedia data sources and the adoption of a systematic approach using CAQDAS (Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software) can help prevent data from being ‘lost’ in the analysis process (Slutskaya et al., in press). Unlike analysis of other forms of social scientific data, film data provides researchers with unique opportunities for ‘time out’ – to play back, to re-frame, to re-focus and re-evaluate. Researchers also acquire extra flexibility because the documentary format, similar to video methods, allows for multiple takes on the data – facilitating exploration of different issues on different occasions, or consideration of the same issue from multiple standpoints

(Heath et al., 2010). Video data, including documentary, offers an opportunity to return to the original material in order to verify, clarify or develop findings further (Pink, 2007). Documentary can be treated as the principal form of data on which insights and findings are based or it can work as an illustration, revealing and enhancing observations largely generated through fieldwork.

As yet, there is no single acknowledged ‘video analysis technique’ (Spencer, 2011). As with the analysis of conventional, text-based qualitative data, the researcher’s choice of a video data analysis method should be driven by research questions and the researcher’s theoretical and epistemological perspective. Hence, to date, video-based scholars have borrowed from various disciplines to analyse video data or films. Banks (2012) provides useful examples of how some researchers have applied content analysis in order to identify a number of patterns, themes or latent meanings (i.e. repeated sequences of shots with similar content) that function as a means of delivering particular messages to the audience (see, for example, Iedema’s (2001) study of failings in the Australian hospital system). Scholars like Iedema (2001) compile detailed descriptive shot lists in order to build a convincing weight of evidence. Clarke (2011), in her researcher-led, video-ethnographic study of entrepreneurs’ impression management, iteratively examined video footage of entrepreneurs’ interactions, alongside interview transcripts, to develop detailed descriptive case studies. Similarities and differences within and between cases were then analysed in order to develop theory.

In contrast, drawing on more constructivist traditions, Hindmarsh and Tutt (2012) advocate applying the guiding principles of conversation analysis to examining and understanding video data, including documentary films. According to these scholars, each action is shaped by its immediate context which, in turn, shapes the setting in which subsequent actions emerge (Heritage, 1984). This principle leads to a particular

treatment of evidence in which researchers are expected to attend to the ways in which participants themselves treat conduct in situ, rather than trying to abstract actions from their immediate sequential context. This approach endorses the meticulous transcription and analysis of microcomponents of social action within the documentary data (Banks, 2012). Whichever analytical approach a researcher selects, it is important to recognize that analysis of video data requires significant time for repeated iterations of watching, and reflecting on the data – until meaning gradually reveals itself (Spencer, 2011). Banks (2012) aptly refers to this process as allowing the images to ‘breathe’.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN FILMMAKING

There are a number of additional practical issues that researchers should take into account before adopting the documentary filmmaking approaches outlined in this chapter. Table 20.2 summarizes questions researchers can ask themselves in order to address these issues.

A fundamental practical consideration for researchers in selecting the documentary filmmaking route is to ensure that adequate funding is available. It is important to fully assess the costs of production, editing and dissemination against the amount of funding available (Parr, 2007). A shortfall in funding could limit the amount of viable options regarding film approaches. In particular, some approaches will need more expertise to execute than others, which will increase costs. For example, the performative approach requires increased sensitivity and careful editing as it deals with emotional expression. Furthermore, this approach includes a voiceover, music and interviews, thus production, editing and labour costs will increase. Similarly, the participatory approach involves collaboration between the

Table 20.2 Practical considerations in documentary filmmaking

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Funding	• Financial constraints • Production costs • Editing costs • Dissemination costs
Cultural bias and personal factors	• Age • Gender • Political interests • Researcher – subject relationship
Location	• Where? • When? • Consent?
Camera positioning	• What is the message? • Which camera angles best convey this message?
Duration of film footage	• How many hours are allocated to shooting? • What is the duration of the final film?

filmmaker and subject which will increase production time and labour costs. Ideally, researchers should ensure that they use the initial research development (and funding application) phase to develop clear, fully costed plans commensurate with the type of documentary approach that will be of greatest benefit to the project.

Cultural bias and personal factors such as: age, gender, political interests and the relationship between the researcher and the subject can also affect practical decisions regarding the production and composition of ethnographic filmmaking (Henley, 1998). For example, a management researcher specializing in gender inequality among managerial positions may favour a participatory approach or a performative approach to enable subjects to convey their own experiences. However, a market analyst specializing in quantitative research may favour an expository approach, allowing them to inform audiences with analytic facts. Researchers need to be self-aware and practise reflexivity in their choice and justification of type of documentary approach.

The filmmaker must consider very carefully the location of filming, as well as when the filming should take place (Henley, 1998). The film setting must suit the purpose of the film without distracting from the key message. For example, filming an interview based on someone's personal experiences at work should not be set in a busy coffee shop. Doing so would be insensitive towards the subject expressing their personal experiences, and on a practical level, the external noise of a busy coffee shop may detract from the key message being conveyed. Researchers should be aware of the need to obtain permission to film in particular locations. For example, before conducting an observational approach to unveil the experiences of an unseen occupation, the filmmaker must obtain consent from the organization. Additionally, financial constraints will affect decisions regarding location.

Furthermore, one should consider carefully where cameras will be placed (Henley, 1998). Camera position, and the resulting shot framing and camera angles, influences the message conveyed to the audience. For example, in Loznitsa's films, long shots are used to set the scene (Alpert, 2013), rather than low angle shots which portray a character as frightened or endangered (Millerson & Owens, 2012). In management research, a documentary aimed at informing an audience of changes to management policy would require long and medium shots, whereas a documentary conveying the emotional experience of a marginalized group of employees may require a mixture of long shots, close up shots and low angle shots to express various emotions. Finally, the filmmaker needs to consider how many hours of film footage to shoot, which may also be impacted by financial constraints, as well as the full duration of the final production (Henley, 1998).

CONCLUSION

In the last 20 years, the use of video-based methods in academic research has yielded a

wide range of novel observations and findings. Video-based studies have contributed to different areas in the field ranging from organizational analysis and technology studies to more general studies exploring the communicative and linguistic aspects of work interactions (Heath et al., 2010). Despite growing interest in video-based methods in organizational research, the use of documentaries remains rare. Against this background, the aim of this chapter was to give a brief overview of available approaches to documentary-making and the potential for organizational scholars to consider them as a methodological tool. Our discussion raised questions concerning the relationships between documentary filmmaking and research while outlining both commonalities and differences. We evaluated the strengths and limitations of existing approaches to making documentaries, identifying the unique features of each approach, their technical dimensions (for example, the use of a narrator's voice) and possible applications. Throughout this chapter we have invited researchers to reflect upon how the inclusion of documentaries in research may have the power to extend the reach of traditional research tools and techniques – by foregrounding participants' accounts, capturing less recognized aspects of experience, and in turn triggering a fuller, yet more focused exploration of participants' working lives (Slutskaya et al., in press). We have also argued that filmmaking can open researchers' minds to different ways in which knowledge can be obtained/constructed (Rakić & Chambers, 2010).

Based on the examples and literature reviewed, it can be concluded that documentaries offer researchers an important investigative tool through the power and agency inherent in film (Pink, 2003), as well as a potential participatory tool that gives voice to participants to express their concerns. By incorporating documentaries in academic research projects, it may be possible to generate a more polyphonic account in which different voices are represented, and where the social distance between researchers and participants may

be reduced, especially through collaborative projects (Parr, 2007). The more collaborative approaches to documentary-making may also facilitate the development of greater participant trust. Hence, participatory or collaborative documentaries might be a particularly valuable resource for any research that requires rapport in order to engage with sensitive topics, or aspects of work that are poorly understood because employees feel normatively bound not to speak out, (e.g. organizational politics, team dynamics or difficult customer interactions) (Slutskaya et al., in press).

The use of documentaries offers innovative opportunities for presenting management research findings in ways that reach not only traditional academic audiences but also practitioners and policy makers. The role of visual methods in disseminating academic research findings is acknowledged in organizational and management research yet, to date, little attention has been paid to developing their potential (Meyer et al., 2013). Until recently, conventional academic publishing constrained the use of film as a means to communicate and/or support research findings. However, some journal publishers are beginning to provide free access for authors to web-based dissemination toolkits. For example, authors of papers published by Wiley are offered access to 'Kudos' (www.growkudos.com), which enables researchers to create links between their traditional paper outputs and a range of associated resources, including video. Alternatively, authors of academic studies using documentaries could simply include web links in journal articles to their research project website, and/or upload the film to YouTube and Vimeo, so that readers can access the documentary. Finally, future researchers could consider one of several ethnographic film festivals for wider dissemination of their documentary to non-traditional audiences (for example, such festivals as www.withoutabox.com/ or <http://filmfreeway.com/>).

REFERENCES

- Alpert, E. (2013). The visual in documentary: Sergei Loznitsa and the importance of the image. *Studies in Documentary Film*, 7(2), pp 135–145.
- Banks, M. (2012). True to life: Authenticity and the photographic image. In T. Fillitz and A. J. Saris (eds) *Debating Authenticity: Concepts of Modernity in Anthropological Perspective*, pp 160–172. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Bauman, Z. (1991). *Modernity and the Holocaust*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Belk, R. (2011). Examining markets, marketing, consumers, and society through documentary films. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 31(4), pp 403–409.
- Boud, D. and Miller, N. (1996). *Working with Experience: Animating Learning*. Hove, UK: Psychology Press.
- Brigden, C. (2005). Creating labour's space: The case of the Melbourne Trades Hall. *Labour History*, 89, pp 125–140.
- Bruzzi, S. (2000). *New Documentary: A Critical Introduction*. London: Routledge.
- Buchanan, D. and Huczynski, A. (2004). Images of influence: 12 angry men and thirteen days. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 13(4), pp 312–23.
- Cagle, C. (2012). Postclassical nonfiction: Narration in the contemporary documentary. *Cinema Journal*, 52(1), pp 45–65.
- Carroll, K., Iedema, R. and Kerridge, R. (2008). Reshaping ICU ward round practices using video-reflexive ethnography. *Qualitative Health Research*, 18(3), pp 380–90.
- Cebula, R. and Comer, D.R. (2007). Career success at what cost?: Work vs. personal life in *The Devil Wears Prada*. *Regional Labor Review*, 10, pp 40–1.
- Clarke, J. (2011). Revitalizing entrepreneurship: How visual symbols are used in entrepreneurial performances. *Journal of Management Studies*, 48(6), pp 1365–91.
- Comer, D. R. and Holbrook, R. L. (2011). Getting behind the scenes of Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours*: Using a documentary on the making of a music album to learn about task groups. *Journal of Management Education*, 36(4), pp 544–67.

- Corner, J. (1996). *The Art of Record*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
- de Lange, N., Olivier, T. and Wood, L. (2008). Participatory video documentary: Just for whom? *Education as Change*, 12(2), pp 109–22.
- DelGaudio, S. (1997). If truth be told, can'toons tell it? Documentary and animation. *Film History*, 9(2), pp 189–99.
- Ellis, J. (2012). Why digitise historical television? *VIEW Journal of European Television History and Culture*, 1(1), pp 27–33.
- Gaines, J. M. and Renov, M. (1999). *Collecting Visible Evidence* (Vol. 6). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Goodman, P. S. (2004). Filmmaking and research: An intersection. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 13(4), pp 324–35.
- Grimshaw, A. (2002). Eyeing the field: New horizons for visual anthropology. *Journal of Media Practice*, 3(1), pp 7–15.
- Hampe, B. (1997). *Making Documentary Films and Reality Videos*. New York: Holt.
- Heath, C. and Hindmarsh, J. (2002). Analysing interaction. In T. May (ed.) *Qualitative Research in Action*. London: Sage, pp 99–122.
- Heath, C., Hindmarsh, J. and Luff, P. (2010). *Video in Qualitative Research: Analysing Social Interaction in Everyday Life*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Henley, P. (1998). Film-making and ethnographic research. In J. Prosser (ed.) *Image-based Research. A Sourcebook for Qualitative Researchers*. London: Routledge, pp 42–60.
- Heritage, J. (1984). A change-of-state token and aspects of its sequential placement. In J. M. Atkinson and J. Heritage (eds) *Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp 299–345.
- Hight, C. and Harindranath, R. (2014). Documentary as sense-making. *Studies in Documentary Film*, 8(3), pp 177–8.
- Hindmarsh, J. and Tutt, D. (2012). Video in analytic practice. In S. Pink (ed.) *Advances in Visual Methodology*. London: Sage, pp 57–73.
- Holbrook, M. B. (2006). Reply to Bradshaw, McDonagh, and Marshall: Turn off the bubble machine. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 26(1), pp 84–7.
- Holbrook, R. L. (2009). OB in a video box: Using *Remember the Titans* as a microcosm for the organizational behavior course. *Journal of Management Education*, 33(4), pp 490–513.
- Huczynski, A. and Buchanan, D. (2004). Theory from fiction: A narrative process perspective on the pedagogical use of feature film. *Journal of Management Education*, 28(6), pp 707–26.
- Iedema, R. (2001). Analysing film and television: A social semiotic account of *Hospital: An Unhealthy Business*. *Handbook of Visual Analysis*. London: Sage, pp 183–204.
- Kopple, B. (dir.) (1990). *American Dream*. [Motion picture]. USA: Miramax.
- Koppel, G. (dir.) (2008). *Sleep furiously* [Motion picture]. UK: New Wave Films.
- Lashua, B. D. (2010). 'Crossing the line': Addressing youth leisure, violence and socio-geographic exclusion through documentary film-making. *Leisure Studies*, 29(2), pp 193–206.
- LeBaron, G. (2008). Captive labor and the free market: Prisoners and production in the USA. *Capital & Class* 32(2), pp 59–81.
- Mathew, W. (2014). Reality in ethnographic film: Documentary vs. docudrama. *Visual Anthropology*, 27(1–2), pp 17–24.
- McCarty, M. (1995). McCarty's Law and how to break it. In P. Hockings (ed.) *Principles of Visual Anthropology*. New York: Walter de Gruyter, pp 69–75.
- McDonagh, P. and Brereton, P. (2010). Screening not greening: An ecological reading of the greatest business movies. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 30(2), pp 133–46.
- McDonald, I. (2007). Situating the sport documentary. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 31(3), pp 208–25.
- Meyer, R., Höllerer, M., Jancsary, D. and van Leeuwen, T. (2013). The visual dimension in organizing, organization, and organization research: Core ideas, current developments, and promising avenues. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 7(1) pp 489–555.
- Millerson, G. and Owens, J. (2012). *Television Production*. Waltham, MA: Focal Press.
- Mondada, L. (2006). Video recording as the reflexive preservation and configuration of phenomenal features for analysis. In H. Knoblauch, J. Raab, H.-G. Soeffner and B. Schmettler (eds) *Video Analysis*. Bern, Switzerland: Lang, pp 51–67.

- Moore, M. (dir.) (1989). *Roger & Me* [Motion picture]. United States: Warner Bros.
- Nash, K., Hight, C. and Summerhayes, C. (eds.) (2014). *New Documentary Ecologies: Emerging Platforms, Practices and Discourses*. London: Palgrave Macmillan
- Nichols, B. (1988). The voice of documentary. In A. Rosenthal (ed.) *New Challenges for Documentary*. London: University of California Press, pp 48–63.
- Nichols, B. (2010). *Introduction to Documentary, Second Edition*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Nichols, B. (2016). *Speaking Truths with Film: Evidence, Ethics, Politics in Documentary*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Orvell, M. (1995). *After the Machine: Visual Arts and the Erasing of Cultural Boundaries*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi.
- Parr, H. (2007). Collaborative film-making as process, method and text in mental health research. *Cultural Geographies*, 14(1), pp 114–38.
- Pink, S. (2003). Interdisciplinary agendas in visual research: Re-situating visual anthropology. *Visual Studies*, 18(2), pp 179–92.
- Pink, S. (2007). Video in ethnographic research. In *Doing Visual Ethnography*. London: Sage, pp 96–117.
- Rakić, T. and Chambers, D. (2010). Innovative techniques in tourism research: An exploration of visual methods and academic film-making. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 12(4), pp 379–89.
- Riggs, M. (1989). *Tongues Untied*. [Motion picture]. USA: Frameline.
- Slutskaya, N., Game, A. M. and Simpson, R. (in press). Better together: Examining the role of collaborative ethnographic documentary in organizational research. *Organizational Research Methods*.
- Smets, M., Burke, G., Jarzabkowski, P. and Spee, A. P. (2014). Charting new territory for organizational ethnography: Insights from a team-based video ethnography. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, 3(1), pp 10–26.
- Smith, G. W. (2009). Using feature films as the primary instructional medium to teach organizational behavior. *Journal of Management Education*, 33(4), pp 462–89.
- Spencer, S. (2011). *Visual Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. New York: Routledge.
- Swinnen, A. (2013). Dementia in documentary film: *Mum* by Adelheid Roosen. *The Gerontologist*, 53(1), pp 113–22.
- Tadajewski, M. and Hamilton, K. (2014). Waste, art, and social change: Transformative consumer research outside of the academy? *Journal of Macromarketing*, 34(1), pp 80–6.
- Trinh, T. Min-ha. (1989). *Surname Viet Given Name Nam*. [Motion picture]. USA: Women Make Movies.
- Waldron, D. (2014). The poetic mode as depiction: Sense-value and Gideon Koppel's *sleep furiously*. *Studies in Documentary Film*, 8(2), pp 116–29.
- Young, C. (1995). Observational cinema. In P. Hockings (ed.) *Principles of Visual Anthropology*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, pp 99–113.

PART III

Methodological Developments



This page intentionally left blank

Aesthetics: Working With the Senses

Martyna Śliwa

INTRODUCTION

In the editorial introduction to the tenth anniversary issue of the journal *The Senses and Society*, Michael Bull and David Howes (2016, p. 2) have declared that ‘the sensual revolution in the humanities, social sciences and the arts is flourishing’. As a discipline belonging to the social sciences, management and organization studies (MOS) have not remained outside this general turn towards the sensual. Since the mid 1990s there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of aesthetic knowledge, i.e. knowledge acquired through the senses, for researching organizations. Crucially for this *Handbook* and especially in the context of the discussion presented in this chapter, efforts to incorporate aesthetics into organizational research have mainly been pursued by qualitative researchers.

Insights into the link between the ‘aesthetic’/ ‘sensual’ and the ‘qualitative’ can be found in the origins of this line of research

and the kind of research questions explored by those MOS scholars interested in aesthetics. Bringing aesthetics into MOS has been framed as an antidote to an excessive reliance on a paradigm of organization that emphasizes rationality and objectivism. This paradigm has traditionally been associated with a belief in the possibility of ‘discovering’ objective knowledge and establishing ‘truth’ about management and organizations through the application of quantitative data and methods of analysis. To counter this dominance of rationalist and objectivist epistemological assumptions, scholars have called for research that inquires into organizations as socially constructed and subjectively, bodily experienced; and in particular research that takes account of the art, sensuality and symbolism as immanent features of organizations, the processes of organizing and the experience of organizational life (e.g. Bell & Davison, 2013; Carr & Hancock, 2003; Gagliardi, 1990; Guillet de Monthoux, 2004; Strati, 1992; Taylor & Hansen, 2005; Taylor & Ladkin,

2009). It has also been argued that the rise of the ‘aesthetic economy’ (Böhme, 2003) triggers the need to explore how, and to what end, the aesthetic dimension of organization – manifested, for example, in the design and ‘landscaping’ (Gagliardi, 1990) of corporate buildings and offices or company logos – is deliberately managed (e.g. Dale & Burrell, 2008; Hancock, 2003; Warren, 2008) and how, and with what implications, workers are expected to engage in aesthetic labour (e.g. Butler & Harris, 2015; Warhurst et al., 2000; Warhurst & Nickson, 2007). Understandably, answering these kinds of questions, with their emphasis on the generation of rich insights into the subjective experiences of individuals, and a strong interest in the ‘how’ and ‘to what end’ of the organizing processes necessitates qualitative empirical approaches. In a similar vein, organizational leadership has been conceptualized as occurring and ‘constructed in and through the sensing and experiencing bodies’ (Ropo et al., 2013, p. 380) and as such, calling for investigation through an aesthetic lens (e.g. Bouilloud & Deslandes, 2015; Hansen et al., 2007; Koivunen & Wennes, 2011; Ropo & Sauer, 2007; Ropo et al., 2013; Sinclair, 2005). Viewed this way, leadership is a phenomenon that needs to be explored in detail at the level of the individual and relationships between individuals. Qualitative methods are better suited to carrying out such an investigation empirically than are quantitative methods that have typically been applied in mainstream leadership studies.

Against this background and in line with the *Handbook*’s emphasis on research methods, in the remainder of this chapter I first discuss the complexities involved in researching organizational aesthetics and give a general overview of various research process related issues for consideration by researchers wishing to empirically ‘work with the senses’. Subsequently, I examine a number of existing studies that have adopted the aesthetic lens, focusing on the methods of data collection, analysis and representation applied by their

authors. On this basis, I highlight what kinds of insights and knowledge have been generated through the use of these particular methods, and discuss possible future directions for the development of research methods exploring the aesthetic in organizational life. The chapter addresses developments in MOS in general, rather than in specialist areas such as accounting, advertising, consumer research, marketing, operations management, leadership and human resources management (see e.g. Amsteus et al., 2016; Davison, 2015; Davison & Warren, 2017; Homburg et al., 2015; Krishna, 2010; Patrick, 2016; Phillips, 2016; van Marrewijk & Broos, 2012). In its preoccupation with methods applied in studying the aesthetic aspects of organization empirically, it does not cover work that is primarily concerned with the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of aesthetics in organizations.

The selection of examples through which I illustrate the current ‘state of the art’ with regard to the research methods applied in MOS studies investigating the aesthetic is, out of necessity, incomplete and arbitrary. Throughout the chapter, I have attempted to reconcile an ambition to represent the diversity of approaches that can be found in the field – on a spectrum of those adopting ‘intellectual’ or ‘artistic’ methods, and those whose content focuses on ‘instrumental’ or ‘aesthetic’ issues (Taylor & Hansen, 2005) – with a wish to offer a relatively detailed account of the research methods. In doing so, I have chosen to concentrate on a smaller number of studies that collectively build a picture of how the aesthetic dimension of organizational life has been researched and represented.

THE COMPLEXITIES OF ‘WORKING WITH THE SENSES’

Researching the aesthetic dimension of management and organization is complex. As Warren (2008, p. 560) explains, aesthetic

knowledge is derived from aesthetic experiences, i.e. 'subjective reactions to material things (real or imagined)' which are often 'involuntary, overwhelming and short-lived', and 'is acquired in the first instance by the continual stream of sense impressions that provide the backdrop of everyday life' (Warren, 2008, p. 561). A crucial implication stemming from the ephemeral and elusive nature of the aesthetic experience is that aesthetic knowledge cannot be easily represented and communicated through words and numbers. Rather, it calls for the usage of other 'languages ... from visual to gestural, and other knowledge-creating processes, from intuitive to evocative' (Strati, 2000, p. 14). What further complicates the process of constructing and conveying aesthetic knowledge is the 'double character' (Welsch, 1997) of the aesthetic, in that it consists of the sensory experience that is felt at an individual level, and of the judgements formed on its basis. These judgements, in turn, are constructed intersubjectively and impacted by the processes of socialization within a particular context (Warren, 2008).

This does not mean that sensory experiences and judgements have not been subject to quantification in the sphere of management and organization. Everyday life provides instances where, particularly as customers, we are asked to 'grade' our bodily experiences. The ratings we give are subsequently analysed through the application of quantitative methods and the results are used to supply managers with information in support of managerial decision-making. To illustrate this: a passenger arrives at Heathrow airport, disembarks from the aircraft, waits in a queue towards passport control and exchanges a few sentences with an immigration officer enquiring about the place of the passenger's departure and the purpose and intended duration of their visit to the United Kingdom. By the time s/he has passed through immigration control, the passenger's body will have acquired a range of aesthetic experiences. These would have been felt affectively, such as perhaps an

accelerated heart beat, sweating of palms and a feeling of 'butterflies' in the passenger's stomach. To an extent, these aesthetic experiences would have also manifested themselves through a verbalized stream of consciousness and more or less coherent stories made up from thoughts associated with, for example, anxiety, irritation, relief and excitement. Past immigration in the 'Arrivals' hall, the passenger encounters a machine with four coloured buttons – green, lime, pink and red – and a screen located above them. Each button is imprinted with an emoticon representing different levels of satisfaction: from a 'happy' (green) to an 'unhappy' (red) face. The question on the screen reads: 'How was your arrivals experience today?'

By pressing one of the buttons, the passenger provides the management of Heathrow airport with quantifiable and, possibly, managerially useful information about her/his judgement of the overall experience. To a researcher seeking to build aesthetic knowledge through generating insights into 'what it feels like' to arrive at Heathrow and go through passport and immigration control, however, the information about which button a given passenger pressed and about numerically expressed levels of passenger satisfaction on arrival at Heathrow is likely to seem insufficient for understanding the aesthetic judgement made by the passenger. Indeed, it might even seem irrelevant, if the researcher's primary interest is in capturing the complexity of the sensual experience, from understanding the stream of sense impressions that form it, to how these sense impressions are interconnected and interpreted. Addressing such research interest empirically calls for qualitative, rather than quantitative methods.

When studying the aesthetics of the organization, it is the researcher's task to present the audience with aesthetic knowledge in a way that is 'as loyal as possible to the context, the embodied, sensory and affective experiences, and the negotiations and intersubjectivities through which the knowledge was produced' (Pink, 2013, p. 35). At the same time, the

complexity of aesthetic knowledge presents researchers with multiple challenges in relation to answering the epistemological question of ‘how we might both acquire and communicate knowledge of sensuality’ (Hancock, 2011, p. 12) in MOS. These challenges notwithstanding, there has been a plethora of successful attempts by organizational researchers to create space for employing ‘aesthetic awareness as a legitimate form of understanding organizational life’ (Strati, 1992, p. 568). This has been done through paying attention to how different senses, often considered individually but sometimes in combination with other senses, allow us to gain insights into organizations and the processes of organizing. For anyone wishing to empirically engage in this kind of research using qualitative approaches, it is important to reflect on a number of issues associated with the whole process of construction and communication of aesthetic knowledge about organizations and management.

Focus and Objectives of the Research

To start with, it is crucial to consider what the focus of the research is going to be. Research that pays attention to the senses is likely to be interested not in the senses per se – for example, in what can be visually discerned in the office space or what can be smelled on the factory floor – but in the meanings sensory experiences have for the organizational members, or what insights they give us into the organizational culture, history, power relations, etc. It is possible that a precise definition of the research question is not going to be formed a priori, and therefore it is important to retain an openness to different possibilities in this regard upon entering the field. As the examples of Baxter and Ritchie’s (2013) and Shortt’s (2013) studies discussed later in this chapter demonstrate, the significance of a particular sense or multi-sensoriality within the field might occur to the researcher once s/he has immersed her/himself in the studied environment, and upon this

realization a previously unanticipated research question might be formulated.

When constructing knowledge about the aesthetic aspect of the organization, researchers might also choose to ask questions which do not call for a direct empirical investigation within a fieldwork site. Rather, addressing these questions might involve mobilizing the researcher’s senses, be it metaphorically, as with Rippin’s (2013a) piece, or literally as in the case of Rippin’s (2013b) and Sørensen’s (2014) research discussed below. Such analyses can have as their main objective promoting researcher reflexivity, arriving at new theoretical insights into organizational aesthetics, and drawing attention to important conceptual links, such as the connection between the aesthetic and the political dimension of organization (see Sørensen, 2010, 2014; also Beyes, 2016; Beyes & Steyaert, 2012).

Perspective from Which the Research is Conducted

Another question to answer when ‘working with the senses’ refers to whose perspective(s) the researcher seeks to capture. For example, is the research primarily interested in the aesthetic dimension of the organization from the perspective of the researcher or of the participants? It is possible to give priority to the researcher’s aesthetic experience (see examples of Strati’s (1992) and Baxter and Ritchie’s (2013) studies discussed below). Research based on auto-ethnographic sensory participation allows the researcher to build aesthetic knowledge about the studied organization based on her or his own embodied sensory experience of it (Pink, 2015). In such situations, it is important to reflect on how this experience can contribute to generating insights about the aesthetic dimension of the organization (as in Strati’s case), and how it can play a role in promoting researcher reflexivity, and as such offer insights into the changing relationship between the researcher and the participants/fieldwork site (as in the

case of Baxter and Ritchie's (2013) study). It is crucial to remember that the sensory experience of the organization will have different meanings for the researcher and for the organizational members. The example of Warren's (2008) study which I elaborate on below provides a vivid illustration of this broader point which relates to both the subjective nature of sensory perception and of individuals' interpretations of it.

Choice of Fieldwork Methods

Further, the choice of which methods to adopt when 'working with the senses' is key to the research design. Decisions about which methods are appropriate for a given piece of research will underpin its success potential. As Pink (2015, p. 57) highlights, through the use of different methods, *different* 'sorts of engagements are facilitated' and *different* 'types of knowledge' are produced. What adds complexity to the issue of how to access others' sensory experience is that in different cultures, different meanings are attached to the senses. Depending on their cultural backgrounds, the participants might not necessarily perceive the world according to the modern western sensorium of vision, hearing, touch, taste and smell (Howes & Classen, 1991, 2014). An awareness of the cultural groundedness of sensoria therefore becomes of particular relevance when exploring the aesthetic dimension of management and organization in multicultural contexts.

To qualitative researchers, the most familiar and frequently used fieldwork method is the interview. For this reason, it is also unsurprising that those 'working with the senses' – including the researchers behind the examples discussed in this chapter, such as Warren (2008), Riach and Warren (2015) and Shortt (2013) – have also tended to apply this method, either on its own or in combination with other ways of generating empirical material. Pink (2015) proposes reframing the ethnographic interview as a 'multisensory

event': an embodied encounter that is not only social, but also sensorial and affective, whereby the 'sensing bodies' of the researcher and the participant perceive each other as well as the total environment in which the interview is taking place. Interviews can be very effective in situations where it is possible for the interviewee to recall and elaborate on their sensory experiences and the meanings thereof. This, however, is not always the case. Therefore, research into the aesthetic dimension of management and organization often draws on aesthetic methods as a way of accessing sensory experience and learning about the aesthetic. For example, when conducting an interview, the researcher might use different elicitation techniques which consist of presenting the interviewee with a sensory object, for example a photograph, a video- or audio-recording, or a smell card. The sensory object can be provided either by the researcher or the participant. The examples of Warren's (2008), Riach and Warren's (2015) and Shortt's (2013) studies illustrate how sensory elicitation can be accomplished in practice, and how it can be conducive to constructing aesthetic knowledge. Here, it is important to remember that an approach to elicitation that draws on a particular sense, e.g. sight – as in the case of photo-elicitation – can be used to trigger articulation of an experience mediated through another sense, e.g. hearing, or indeed, it can evoke discussion of more than one sense. Through deliberately engaging the participants' senses during the interview, the researcher creates the opportunity to gain access to the interviewees' multi-sensory impressions and memories.

Approach to the Analysis of Empirical Material

When carrying out empirical qualitative research on the aesthetic dimension of the organization, another set of questions for the researcher's consideration refer to when and how to analyse the collected material. On the

one hand, the process of analysis takes place in parallel with fieldwork: it is part of the researcher's ongoing reflexivity, usually recorded through written and/or audio field-notes. As such, it is difficult and perhaps unnecessary to attempt to make a clear-cut distinction between data collection and analysis. On the other, the material gathered throughout the fieldwork will also be subjected to a systematic analytical process that involves the identification of patterns and themes, and a search for answers to specific research questions, typically in light of the earlier literature on the subject and against the theoretical and conceptual framework underpinning the research. As the examples discussed below (e.g. Riach & Warren, 2015; Shortt, 2013) demonstrate, this is usually done following transcription of the empirical material which is subsequently coded and analysed using established qualitative analysis techniques. The analysis itself is an embodied process, informed by the researcher's sensory memories of the fieldwork site. These are evoked, for example, when the researcher carries out transcription and coding of the data. In fact, sensory memories can inspire new engagements with the site and the research participants. In particular, where research is conducted by more than one researcher, sharing sensory memories and reflections upon them with the co-researcher(s) can enrich analysis and interpretation of the material. As in the case of Baxter and Ritchie's (2013) study, it can promote researcher reflexivity in a way that enables exploration of previously unanticipated research questions and generation of new insights.

Format and Medium of Representation

Regardless of the possible multisensoriality of both fieldwork methods and insights generated in the research process, the representation and communication of knowledge about the aesthetic aspect of organization faces

limitations posed by the conventions of academic publication in MOS. Typically, the research is communicated in the form of a text, sometimes accompanied by photographs. In addition, the final text is expected to have been composed according to the principles guiding a particular genre, such as a journal article, a chapter in an edited collection or a monograph, and is supposed to offer not only empirical but also conceptual and theoretical contributions. At the same time, a piece of qualitative research on the senses should 'engage readers ... in ways that are sensual, empathetic and reflexive' (Pink, 2015, p. 167). The examples discussed later in this chapter demonstrate how researchers have accomplished this when preparing journal articles. While more experimental approaches to representing research into organizational aesthetics, for example through film-making, have been attempted (e.g. Wood, 2011), the current technological limitations and disciplinary conventions of scholarly publication make it difficult for these to become mainstream.

In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss examples of research focusing on the senses of sight, smell and touch, as well as multisensory research that combines a focus on the visual with the audible, and research that draws on the visual and the haptic. While recognizing that 'the senses are interconnected and not always possible to understand as if separate categories' (Pink, 2015, p. xiii), for reasons of presentational clarity, most of the examples I discuss address different senses in separation. This is also a common practice in multidisciplinary publications on the senses (e.g. Bull & Back, 2003; Classen, 2003; Drobnick, 2006; Edwards & Bhaumik, 2008; Korsmeyer, 2005).

ATTENDING TO THE VISUAL

Drawing on the sense of sight has so far been the most widely adopted approach by MOS scholars interested in researching the

aesthetic. This is hardly surprising. It is commonly agreed that within the modern western sensorium, the ‘ocularcentric’ aspect of human sensual perception is given primacy (Corbett, 2003; Kavanagh, 2004). Moreover, the technologies conventionally used for the purposes of communicating research results are at present considerably more advanced and accommodating when it comes to reproducing visual material, such as photographs and videos, than they are with regard to conveying sound, let alone smell, taste and touch.

This is not to say that methodological challenges involved in working with visual material in MOS research have by now been resolved. As Bell and Davison (2013) observe, despite signs pointing to the emergence of the ‘visual turn’ in management studies, existing literature is yet to fully explore and theorize visibility and the visual. To date, scholars have been adopting two broad approaches to data collection, either relying on pre-existing material to carry out ‘visual content analysis’, or generating new empirical material for the purposes of ‘visual elicitation’. Bearing in mind the pre-eminence of visual research within the aesthetic approaches to studying management and organization and the diverse range of methods adopted, below I use as examples the methods applied in three pieces of research to elaborate on how a researcher might approach the subject of researching the aesthetic aspect of organization. Two of these represent what by now are seminal contributions to the sub-field of organizational aesthetics, and their authors strongly argue for the adoption of an aesthetic lens in empirical studies of organizations: Strati’s (1992) discussion of the aesthetic appearance of two office spaces in an Italian firm, and Warren’s (2008) study of a workplace aestheticization programme in the web-design department of a global IT company. The third piece, Sørensen’s (2014) analysis of the ‘Organizational aesthetics of the dark side’, mobilizes ‘aesthetic juxtaposition’ in a theoretical endeavour that

challenges the way in which the ‘dark side’ of organization tends to be normalized and collectively understood.

The Researcher’s Gaze

One area of interest to a qualitative researcher wishing to explore organization and management through a focus on the visual refers to exploring the aesthetics of organizational life and to interpreting their meaning. Here, the researcher might ask questions regarding those elements of aesthetics that she/he can easily observe using her/his own sense of sight, such as the external and/or internal architecture and layout of the organizational space, and the objects located within it. What does the space and the artefacts communicate to those who enter the organization? For example, what do they say about its culture, structure, values and power relations? Which behaviours are enabled, promoted or perhaps prohibited by the organizational space and artefacts? Guided by these kinds of questions, it is possible for the researcher to design an empirical study around: 1) an auto ethnographic encounter with the organizational space; and 2) interviews with organizational members whose insights into the meanings of the space and the artefacts will be used by the researcher in developing an understanding of organizational life. In this case, the researcher treats the sense impressions that are, first, afforded by her/his own sense of sight upon entering the organization and resulting from spending time on its premises, and second, written down in detail, as ‘data’. The extent to which the researcher is observant towards her/his surroundings will largely shape the amount and quality of the empirical material obtained. The interpretation, composed as a text written by the researcher, will communicate mainly the researcher’s ideas about the meanings of the space and artefacts in the organization, informed by the additional knowledge obtained from the interviews with organizational members.

Within such an approach to constructing and communicating aesthetic knowledge, the researcher's position is central. Through the text, she or he mediates for the reader – who has never visited the organization – the 'flavour' of the aesthetic experience of the organization. At the same time, however, employing this approach also involves drawing on other parties' aesthetic experiences. Specifically, if the research involves interviews with organizational members, it is necessary for the researcher to acknowledge that her/his experiences have been influenced by what s/he has found out about the aesthetic experiences of the interviewees, and that the aesthetic experiences of the interviewees have been influenced by the encounter with the researcher. Finally, the outcome of the research – such as the text produced by the researcher – becomes a source of aesthetic experience for the reader.

An example of an approach to studying organizational aesthetics that gives primary importance to the researcher's gaze is provided by Strati's (1992) widely known piece 'Aesthetic understanding of organizational life'. Strati (1992, p. 569) sensitizes us to the fact that 'aesthetics opens significant "windows in the walls of the organization", that is, windows that both interface with the organization's aesthetic materials and constitute a mirror of organizational facts'. He focuses on the example of organizational space as observed by himself in his capacity of researcher, offering a comparative analysis of the appearance of two offices located in the same organization: the Chairman's office and the office of the Chairman's secretary. Beginning with the Chairman's office, the author describes first of all the location of the office within the building, the pictures that hang on the office's walls, as well as the plants, furniture and equipment installed in the office. Strati advises researchers that when engaging in a description of this kind, it is important not to divide the encountered organizational artefacts into pieces of art and ordinary objects used in routine organizational

practice. The processes that construct organizational aesthetics are, Strati argues, complex and interwoven, and they unfold over time. They are not the outcome of one person's design, but rather they result from the ideas and actions of different individuals, driven by different logics and expressing their personal preferences. As such, they offer a glimpse into both the past and present of the organization. Within this approach, the researcher assumes the task of describing what can be visually observed within the organization and of interpreting its meaning.

In addition to describing the organizational space as observable by a visitor who knows little about the organization itself, Strati also elaborates on some of the artefacts through providing the reader with an account of reflections and actions of organizational members that could not have been constructed simply through looking around the offices. For example, he explains how certain paintings hanging on the walls in the Chairman's office were highly expensive, and how the presence of a particular graphic work 'generated a sense of uncertainty' among the employees, since 'no one was sure of its artistic or economic value, nor of its position in the organization' (Strati, 1992, p. 572). Strati also draws the reader's attention to how some of the aesthetic aspects of the organization would promote particular behaviours by those entering either of the two offices, such as informal conversations that would typically form part of whatever 'business' matter was being dealt with inside the secretary's office, inspired by the inevitable noticing of the photograph of the secretary's children.

In commenting on his methodological approach to 'reading' the aesthetic of the organization in which he conducted research, Strati (1992, p. 575) admits that the kind of discourse he has created in order to convey the sense of the office space and of the organization itself, 'is based on personal allusions, on private analogic processes, and on evocative dynamics that ascribe legitimacy of expression and the right to speak to participants'.

A particularly valuable feature of Strati's (1992) article is that it gives the reader a very good 'feel' for what research into organizational aesthetics might involve – and as such, it invites engagement in similar projects. For a researcher wishing to undertake a study of this kind, it is important to consider in advance various issues around the intended methods of data collection and analysis, for example: What and whom to observe? How to record the observations? How to analyse the observations? When to consider observation complete? Whom to interview? How to analyse the interview data? What is the relationship of the data coming from an auto ethnographic encounter with the organizational aesthetics and the material obtained through interviews? The answers to these questions will depend upon the objectives and circumstances of each study. Strati's (1992) guidance with respect to the analysis and outcome of the research is that those studying the aesthetics of organizational life should pay attention in the analysis to constructing their account in such a way that it becomes plausible to the reader; to conveying the sense of elusiveness of the object of knowledge; and to consciously evoking in readers that which they are going to see (and not to see) through engagement with the text.

Looking Through the Eyes of Organizational Actors

The example of Strati's (1992) research illustrates which methods could be applied when the researcher is interested in observing and interpreting 'the aesthetics of organizational life' by themselves. Researchers who wish to explore organizational aesthetics from the perspective of organizational actors, however, will employ a different research design. A helpful example of this is Warren's (2008) study of a global IT firm which subjected its office space to an 'aestheticization programme'. The programme's objective was to foster a 'fun' working environment. Warren (2008, p. 565) details various 'cosmetic

enhancements of the material office space' which were implemented to serve this purpose, such as 'funky and futuristic' effects achieved through a particular combination of paint and lighting; toys, games and sculptures placed in the office in order to create a sense of fun, to boost the employees' creativity and to shape clients' perception of the company as innovative and creative; the meeting room space furnished as if it were a children's soft play room, with foam blocks serving as seating; and a range of children's toys.

Warren (2008) wished to explore 'how it felt to be an employee who was "required" to play at work, executing her/his duties in an environment where fun was explicitly encouraged' (Warren, 2008, p. 567). However, her interest in the aesthetic was not limited to the research questions, but it also extended over the methods applied for the purposes of data collection. To capture the feelings about the workplace from the perspective of the employees, she recruited 31 of them as participants in her empirical study, and asked them to take photographs that would represent how it felt to work at their department, and in particular would show what the photographer 'liked, disliked, had particular meaning for them, or even [what] they considered bland, boring or meaningless' (Warren, 2008, p. 572). While the idea of conveying 'how it feels' brings to mind associations with all senses, Warren's research design explicitly engaged sight as a way of both representing and eliciting narratives about the embodied experience of working in the studied firm. The photographs taken by the research participants provided 'data' in their own right and served as a vehicle for generating more data, since they were subsequently discussed during semi-structured individual interviews with the participants. Being able to look at and talk about the photographs proved valuable in the interview process: the photographs allowed for the depicted places, people and objects to be more tangibly present in the participants' stories. They were also helpful in

re-creating the aesthetic experience. Finally, interpreting and discussing the photographs together with the participants made it possible for the researcher to explore the socially constructed nature of aesthetic judgements.

One of the reasons why a researcher studying the aesthetic dimension of the organization might want to try to capture the aesthetic experiences of organizational members from their perspective is because being an ‘outsider’ to the organization makes it very difficult for the researcher to empathize with the ‘insiders’. For example, how the researcher feels when spending a limited amount of time within an office space will differ from how those who work there every day feel about it. Strati’s (1992) study discussed above demonstrated how paying attention to organizational space can tell us a lot about the organizational history, values and routines. Warren’s (2008) methodological approach, on the other hand, sensitizes us to the importance of an awareness of the differences between the researcher’s and the organizational members’ aesthetic experiences and judgements. Wishing to develop an ‘empathetic framing’ (Warren, 2008, p. 569) for understanding others’ experiences, in addition to data collection that involved photographs taken by and interviews conducted with organizational members, the researcher undertook a ten-week period of what she refers to as ‘aesthetic ethnography’. Not only did this make it possible for her to experience the aesthetics of organizational life and to develop her own aesthetic judgements about it, but also to realize how much her aesthetic experiences and judgements differed from those of the participants. To her, the office space remained primarily an aesthetic object that she studied, albeit one she had become very familiar with. To the participants, however, the space had multiple connotations with their everyday work and its positive and negative aspects. Their perceptions and experiences of the space were charged with organizational politics, including internal conflicts between management and employees. Warren’s (2008, p. 569) finding that the insiders’ aesthetic judgements

were interwoven with ‘the political economy of the department and the wider organization’ point to the connection between the aesthetic and the political; a connection that, on its own, can be a rich field of investigation for a qualitative researcher.

Warren’s research shows particularly well how when studying the aesthetic dimension of an organization from the perspectives of those working there, a strong reliance on discursive knowledge construction and communication remains, even if the emphasis of the research might be on that which is *visible/visualized*, as meanings are negotiated and communicated between the researcher and the participants through language. The study also demonstrates how bringing together language-based methods such as interviews with visual data such as photographs can result in generating insights that are possibly richer than those gleaned from using either of these methods alone.

Aesthetic Juxtaposition

Strati’s (1992) and Warren’s (2008) studies of organizational aesthetics are examples of empirical investigations conducted within particular organizations. However, a qualitative researcher willing to explore what insights can be gained through an aesthetic experience might also choose to engage the senses in order to pursue a theoretical endeavour, and to create space for asking new questions about the broader ends that research into the aesthetic might serve, such as turning organizational issues into matters of ethical and political significance. Here, aesthetic methods can be mobilized to open up for the researcher and her/his audience creative ways of conceptualizing organization, which would not have been conceived otherwise. Sørensen’s (2014) piece illustrates how this can be accomplished. He applies the aesthetic lens – again, with an emphasis on the visual – through ‘the adaptation of the critical anthropological method of juxtaposition

(Marcus & Fischer, 1986), a *defamiliarizing strategy*' (Sørensen, 2014, p. 281, emphasis in original). The method involves locating two seemingly completely dissimilar visual artefacts next to one another with the objective being 'to let the collision of the two items make the reader/viewer stand back and think anew' (Sørensen, 2013, p. 48).

Any types of artefacts, be it two- or three-dimensional, and more or less obviously evoking associations with management and organization – such as when, for example, Sørensen (2010) puts side by side an image of Caravaggio's painting *Conversion of Saint Paul* with Mintzberg's chart of 'The Six Basic Parts of the Organization' – can be juxtaposed. In this sense, the method is characterized by a simplicity. Its unique ability to generate new insights rests in producing a new sensual experience that results from the colliding and conjoining of two habitually different approaches to perceiving and interpreting what we are presented with. To fully take advantage of the potential for new knowledge that juxtaposition offers, it is necessary, in Sørensen's (2013) view, to analyse, explore and research in depth both sides of juxtaposition, and to take note of all similarities and differences emerging from this process. MOS researchers who intend to apply the method of juxtaposition are urged to obey the following rules regarding 'how to' conduct this kind of research: 1) choosing a visual artefact on the basis 'of its quality of being remarkable, interesting, and even iconic' (Sørensen, 2013, p. 50); 2) experimentation, whereby the researcher should select images that although in a significant way are different, belong to the same 'archive'; and 3) carrying out the analysis in a thorough and detailed manner, on the assumption that 'everything is already there, although it may be enigmatic, veiled, not yet unfolded' (Sørensen, 2013, p. 51).

An exemplary illustration of the application of the method of juxtaposition is Sørensen's (2014, p. 281) analysis that draws on juxtaposition in order to unsettle 'sentimental readings of history', and in particular

of the Holocaust. As the author argues, these readings have roots in a specific convention of 'collective instruction' (Sontag, 2003, p. 73) that shapes memory so as to perceive organization in terms of an apparently clear-cut distinction between a 'dark' and 'light' side. The first of the two images juxtaposed by Sørensen (2014) is a photograph, exhibited in the Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum in Jerusalem, which was taken in the Warsaw ghetto in 1943. It depicts a boy who is being forced out of the ghetto by SS guards. The second image is Paul Klee's 1920 painting *Angelus Novus*, displayed in the Israel Museum, also in Jerusalem. In Walter Benjamin's (1969, p. 249) influential interpretation, the image 'shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history'. With the help of these two iconic images, Sørensen (2014, p. 283) argues that 'juxtaposition and its detailed interpretation may conjure up, paradoxically, an "unrepresentable" reality to witness, at a time when the social sciences have been viewed as suffering a crisis of representation'. In other words, while the two images may be familiar, juxtaposing them gives rise, in the first place, to new aesthetic judgements, and subsequently, to new conceptual connections, insights and knowledge within organization theory. To Sørensen (2013), the main value and ambition of this kind of aesthetic analysis is in making it possible for the researcher to turn organizational issues into matters of ethical and political significance. Despite its seeming simplicity, the method of juxtaposition is not, in Sørensen's (2013, p. 60) own admission, 'an easy one'. It requires creativity, an intimate reflexive engagement with the two juxtaposed artefacts, and rich background knowledge that would allow the researcher to move beyond obvious and superficial interpretations, and to arrive at new insights and perspectives on questions relating to organization and management.

THE SCENT OF AN ORGANIZATION

Thus far, the discussion of specific examples of research into organizational aesthetics has addressed engagement with the sense of sight, both in terms of analysing visual artefacts observed by the researcher to build knowledge about organizations and the processes of organizing, as in the case of Strati's (1992) and Sørensen's (2014) work, and in relation to producing visual data as part of the research process, as shown in the discussion of Warren's (2008) study. Overall, attending to the visual has by now resulted in a substantial body of work that has helped MOS scholars move away from the primacy of 'words and numbers'. At the same time, some authors, for example Corbett (2006, p. 226), argue for the need to develop broader 'sensuous scholarship', based on ethnographic studies, extending the focus on the aesthetic and the application of aesthetic methods beyond an interest in the visual. Although to date, this agenda is yet to become mainstream within MOS research, in recent years there has been a growing interest in generating knowledge about organizations through senses other than sight.

To date, a limited amount of scholarly attention in MOS has been directed towards investigation carried out in relation to smell (but see e.g. Drobnick & Fisher, 2008; Low, 2005; Manalansan IV, 2006) for examples of research on smell in related disciplines). Corbett (2006) highlights the importance of this sense and urges organizational researchers to take smell seriously, both as a way of conducting research into sensuous and invisible aspects of organizations, and in pursuit of reflexivity. To a qualitative MOS researcher, questions about how smell is experienced in workplace contexts, what meanings it has for organizational members and how it influences different aspects of organizational life are of particular interest. This is especially so because from a physiological perspective a unique feature of how smell stimuli are processed by the brain lies in its direct link with

emotions and memories. As Soars (2009, p. 284) explains:

Of all the five senses, smell is the closest linked to emotions because the brain's olfactory system detects odours, fast-tracks signals to the limbic system and links emotions with memories.

Being so powerful in triggering emotions and memories, smell is central to how the world is experienced, which, in turn, makes it an important focus of study for MOS scholars interested in the experiences of individuals in organizations. This refers to both organizational members who encounter the organizational 'smellscapes' on a regular basis but also to researchers who, through concentrating on smell, can use the olfactory aspect of their engagement with the research site as a vehicle for reflection on the research process. Smells, whether encountered in everyday life situations or in the workplace, invoke strong reactions in the body and affect the mind. Research in psychology has shown how a familiar smell can easily give rise to, for example, pleasant memories of childhood holidays, as a consequence of which the body can become filled with a sense of relaxation and joy. On the other hand, in those who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), odours associated with traumatic experiences have the power to trigger trauma-related flashbacks, or be an important component of re-experiencing trauma (Vermetten & Bremner, 2003). Unsurprisingly, then, the occurrence of smells in organizational settings, the ways in which smells affect organizational members and others who encounter the olfactory dimension of the organization, as well as the meanings of smell in organizational contexts call for scholarly attention.

The task of exploring the importance of smell in organizational life, however, poses practical challenges regarding both the methods used in empirical research and ways of communicating research findings. How to collect empirical material addressing the experiences and meanings of smells?

How to re-create the experience of a particular smell in participants? How to analyse smell-related material and how to represent the research findings so that they are plausible and meaningful to the audience? How to turn the researcher's smell impressions into a tool encouraging greater reflexivity about the research process? These issues arise partly because of smell's intangible and ephemeral nature; and partly because it has been identified as the 'mute' sense (Ackerman, 1990), one that is difficult to define and one for which there is no precise language that could be easily shared by researchers and research participants in discussions about types and intensities of odours (Hurdley & Dicks, 2011). To demonstrate how existing research in MOS has dealt with the practicalities of empirical research on smell, below I discuss the research methods applied in two studies that investigate the olfactory dimension of organization. The first, by Riach and Warren (2015), focuses on smell as experienced by and meaningful to organizational members; the second, by Baxter and Ritchie (2013) offers up smell as an entry point into the researchers' sense-making about their ambivalent and evolving relationship to the fieldwork site and the research project they were involved in.

How Does It Smell to Work Here?

Riach and Warren (2015) were interested in organizational members' experiences of smell at work, and the meanings smells had to them. In collecting the empirical material, the authors drew on a combination of 'smell diaries' and interviews with 14 British-born office workers in the UK. Participants were encouraged to focus specifically on 'odours, aroma and smelling' (Riach & Warren, 2015, p. 795) in the context of their workplace. The design of the study consisted of three stages: videotaped 'smell interviews', 'audio smell diaries' and a second round of individual interviews. The objective of the smell

interviews was to enter into a dialogue with the participants about how they experience smell at work. During the discussion, participants were handed out paper strips infused with smells potentially likely to be associated with the office, such as coffee, furniture and sweat. The audio smell diaries contained recordings taken over a period of one week in which the participants commented on their encounters of odours – specific 'smell episodes' – in the workplace. The conversations that took place in the final interviews were audio-recorded and they elaborated on the content of the smell diaries and pictorial representations of the participants' workspaces.

Riach and Warren's (2015) study adopts an aesthetic approach both throughout the research process and in relation to the focus of the research content. It illustrates how a range of methods, engaging different senses, can be applied in collecting material that centres on a particular type of sensory experience. The video-recording of initial interviews allowed for capturing the participants' reactions to the smells they encountered through smell cards. The use of smell cards made it possible to elicit participants' immediate reactions to smell. Similarly, the audio-diaries enabled the participants to record their impressions of a given 'smell episode' sooner and possibly in a more spontaneous manner than if they had been writing down their reflections. All this contributed to the quantity and richness of the collected material, which – when transcribed – resulted in over 600 pages of text.

In the analysis, the authors followed the established conventions of analysing textual qualitative material. The text was coded using qualitative analysis software, and the codes that emerged from the initial analysis of the data were combined with concepts found in anthropological and ethnographic research addressing smell. In particular, wishing to explore the 'interplay between sense experience ... and its articulation' (Riach & Warren, 2015, p. 796), the authors applied Waskul and Vannini's (2008, p. 54, cited in Riach & Warren, 2015, p. 795) concept of 'somatic

work', focusing on 'the activities individuals [use to] produce, extinguish, manage, reproduce, negotiate, interrupt, and/or communicate somatic sensations in order to make them congruent with personal, interpersonal, and/or cultural notions of moral, aesthetic, and/or logical desirability'.

Applying this set of research methods allowed the authors to elicit impressions and reflections upon smells in the workplace, and to theorize about 'how micro-social processes of being together at work are enacted between bodies-who-organize and constitute the conditions of bodily integrity' (ibid.). More specifically, it enabled them to tease out the intercorporeal character of organizational life and its implications at a personal, organizational and social level in a workplace setting by illustrating how 'bodies at work' both absorb the smells produced by others and produce smells themselves. Altogether, the application of 'smell diary' recordings, designed to capture the experience of smell in the workplace in as immediate a way as possible, in combination with more reflexive interviews, made it possible for the authors to generate knowledge about the olfactory aspect of the aesthetic experience of the workplace that is both empirically insightful and theoretically novel.

The Deteriorating Odour of a Project Going Bad

As discussed above, Riach and Warren's (2015) methodological approach can be particularly inspiring to researchers interested in applying aesthetic methods drawing on smell, and in exploring the experiences and meanings of smell in organizational contexts from the perspective of the organizational members. On the other hand, focusing on the olfactory experiences of the researcher can also be a source of important insights, and an effective vehicle for promoting researcher reflexivity. An example of this way of drawing on smell in organizational research is

provided by Baxter and Ritchie's (2013) study.

Similarly to Riach and Warren (2015), Baxter and Ritchie (2013) argue for the need to take greater account of smell when studying organizations, and contend that a focus on smell enables insights into 'extra-discursive' aspects of organizations. In the context of their research, the authors consider smell as central to their reflexive analysis of the fieldwork site. The location of their investigation was a bakery – a research setting that was 'immediately rich in sensory material' (Baxter & Ritchie, 2013, p. 371), and specifically the smell of baking which typically tends to be associated with childhood and invokes pleasant memories. The researchers used their impressions of the smells encountered in the bakery as an inspiration for reflection upon their own 'somatic work' (Waskul & Vannini, 2008) during the time of their engagement in the research project.

The stated objectives of Baxter and Ritchie's (2013) core research project did not include an investigation of smell in the fieldwork organization. Rather, the official focus was on helping the company improve its operations and save costs, while at the same time giving rise to knowledge that would be useful for academic purposes. This 'technology transfer' initiative was publicly funded and was intended to benefit the company itself, the university it collaborated with, and more broadly the economic development at a local level. However, the objectives of the core research project were not fulfilled and eventually it became a case of a 'technology transfer initiative gone wrong'. Seeking to unpack their thoughts and feelings accompanying the gradual deterioration of the project's prospects and the relationship between the company management and the researchers, Baxter and Ritchie (2013) turn to an analysis of their smell impressions – and the emotional connotations thereof – encountered on the fieldwork site. Specifically, what intrigued the researchers was an observation that each of them had initially made

independently, namely that the associations in their minds of the smells of the company which they encountered during each of their visits had been changing: the odours of the bakery, initially considered pleasant and welcoming, over time became repulsive. To explore in more depth how their attitudes to the research setting and the overall project were evolving, Baxter and Ritchie carefully reflected on what their changing olfactory sensations had been suggesting to them.

The material used by Baxter and Ritchie in their reflexive analysis consisted of various types of texts: research notes, documents and emails exchanged with the management of the bakery, and discussions that took place between the researchers, surfacing both the problems encountered in the research process and observations regarding the increasingly difficult relationship to the research site. In the paper, the authors do not present specific quotations from documents or emails, but construct a retrospective narrative addressing the unfolding and a gradual breakdown of the project. In the narrative, Baxter and Ritchie place an emphasis on their own olfactory experiences of the research site and what these signified to them at different points in time. According to their account, at first, the baking smell invoked sensations of ‘hunger and security’, and was concomitant with the positivity of the researchers towards the organization, its management and the research project which was about to commence. On each of the subsequent visits to the company, however, the smell of the site – conceived in both a literal and metaphorical sense – denoted something less and less positive. Week by week, the researchers’ frustration was increasing and they were able to discern its extent by noting how the bakery smell started to invoke in them a sense ‘of dread and revulsion’ and came to be perceived as ‘obnoxious’ (Baxter & Ritchie, 2013, p. 378). In the end, reaching a point of mental fatigue with the project, the researchers admitted that they had had their ‘fill of the pervasive baking smells and wanted to escape’ (Baxter & Ritchie, 2013, p. 379).

In interpreting their relationship to the research site through an olfactory lens, Baxter and Ritchie were able to make connections between the smells they were confronted with and the positivity and negativity of their impressions of the site. Here, the observation about deteriorating smell impressions became a vehicle for promoting researcher reflexivity: smell opened up for them ‘new and multifaceted ways of thinking through both the research process and the phenomenon under study’ (Baxter & Ritchie, 2013, p. 381). At the same time, they were able to reflect on their experience of the research process as embodied, and of themselves as embodied researchers whose position is shaped multisensorily and whose interpretations are constructed through all the senses. Baxter and Ritchie’s (2013) discussion shows that even when, as far as research methods are concerned, the importance of smell in MOS is addressed using textual material as both the ‘data’ and mode of communication, thanks to focusing reflection on olfactory sensation, original insights and a rich understanding of the research site and process, along with the shifting relationship between the researcher and the researched organization can be generated.

THE TACTILE ANAESTHESIA OF ORGANIZATION

Despite the growing interest in ‘working with the senses’ on the part of MOS scholars, to date, little has been said about the role of touch in organizational lives (but see Hancock et al., 2015). This is a surprising omission, considering that the significance of touch has long been acknowledged in some areas of business and management practice, especially in relation to product design. It is, for example, common for product developers to spend a lot of energy making sure that the texture of the tapestry covering a sofa makes it pleasant to touch and inviting to sit on, or

that the tactile sensations we experience when typing on the keyboard of a computer are so attractive that we would choose to purchase a particular brand and model over another one.

If we accept the argument about the intercorporeal character of organizational lives, then what follows is a recognition that bodies in organizations touch and are touched by other bodies, as well as various objects that can be found within organizational space, such as floors, chairs, desks, door handles, machines and tools. Indeed, since touch is the most relational and the most intersubjective of all senses (Paterson & Dodge, 2012), it is central to how we relate to and feel about the workplace. In work organizations, however, argues Rippin (2013a) in her essay on 'The human touch versus silver-handedness: the importance of the haptic in organisational life', we are actively encouraged to distance ourselves from touch and therefore we lose the relational aspect of our work. Below I elaborate on the research methods used in Rippin's (2013a, p. 367) piece in which she calls on management and organizational scholars and practitioners to 'learn how to touch and feel again, and to reclaim the relational element of our work, to reappropriate the notion of touchy-feely-ness ... and to reengage with work and with people through our own sensing, haptic touch'. An important feature of Rippin's (2013a) approach is that rather than engaging empirically with touch, she draws on the haptic metaphorically, using the concept of touch to reflect on ethics, authenticity and humanness in contemporary organizational life.

Recovering the Lost Touch

In considering the role of touch in organizational life, Rippin's (2013a) method consists in drawing on the Grimm brothers' story *The Handless Maiden* and on the psychological interpretations of the story by Johnson (1993) and Estés (1995). Methodologically,

Rippin's piece is situated within the tradition of using literary fiction as a vehicle for organizational inquiry (e.g. Czarniawska-Joerges & Guillet de Monthoux, 1994/2004; Land & Śliwa, 2009). At the centre of Rippin's (2013a, p. 357) discussion is the notion of 'silver-handedness' which to her denotes the kind of 'work in organisations which replaces basic human touch and relatedness with a way of dealing with the world through sterile and sanitised rulebooks, logic, and algorithms'. The Grimms' tale about a maiden who was mutilated through having her hands chopped off and who then received a pair of artificial, silver-made hands serves the author as an inroad into a critical reflection on what happens when organizational practices literally and figuratively neglect the haptic. Rippin (2013a) uses the term 'silver-handedness' metaphorically to highlight how organizations require their managers and employees to give up on their ability to relate to the workplace and work in an embodied manner by expecting them, on entering the organization, to conform to rules and procedures and to leave behind what makes them human: feelings, but also ethics and values. This results in both organizations and their members becoming 'hard', distant from their true selves, other people and true emotions, and losing a reciprocal contact with the world. Rippin (2013a, p. 367) cautions against this loss of authenticity because of its negative ethical and moral consequences and asks that we reclaim our embodied knowledge and become able to 'preserve some form of authentic life, put a student before the regulations, stand up for a colleague, refuse to do a shady deal'.

The author makes a connection between her metaphorical treatment of touch and its literal meaning in the context of organizational life (see also De Vita & Case, 2016). She argues that the 'silver-handedness' of contemporary management has developed in parallel with devaluing those activities within the organization that involve tactile

contact with the material, such as production work in factories, cleaning and catering. While her methodological approach did not encompass an empirical investigation of the meaning of the tactile aesthetic experience in an organizational setting, Rippin's (2013a) piece constitutes an important starting point for engaging with the haptic aspect of the aesthetic experience of organizational life, and a compelling call for rethinking the ethics of our 'being' in organizations (see also Gadoua, 2014; Lammer, 2007).

THE VALUE OF MULTISENSORY RESEARCH FOR EXPLORING HOW ORGANIZATIONS ARE EXPERIENCED

The previous sections have discussed the methodological challenges and choices associated with MOS research that predominantly focuses on one sense. At present, research into organizational aesthetics that adopts the aesthetic lens through drawing explicitly on more than one sense, or through not separating out the different affective elements that together form the experience of organizations, is much less common than such 'one-sense-studies'. At the same time, multisensoryity is of crucial importance to organizational practice. It is manifested, for example, through the ubiquity of visually observable decorations combined with Christmas songs in retail stores throughout November and December, selected by 'sensory marketing executives' to encourage customers to enter the festive spirit and to promote spending on Christmas presents and accessories.

Studying multisensoriality of organizations and the ways individuals relate to them presents a key direction of future research on organizational aesthetics. It also adds to the methodological challenges researchers face in relation to the collection, analysis and presentation of empirical material. Below I discuss some of these, using two examples of

multisensorial research. The first is Shortt's (2013) photo-led study which highlights the importance of sounds in organizational contexts, thus bringing together an emphasis on the visual and the auditory aspects of organizational life. The second is Rippin's (2013b) application of arts-based methods – specifically, the production of textile maps – which serve the researcher to demonstrate how regardless of the geographical location of its physical premises, the studied organization can 'co-exist in the hearts and minds of long-time clients and customers' (Rippin, 2013b, p. 1553).

Building Organizational Sound Walls

In organizational settings, sound is key to communication between members of the organization. For example, the tone and pitch of a person's voice – 'how someone sounds' – will have an impact on whether they are listened to and how their message is going to be interpreted. Yet, the auditory environments of workplace organizations, be it those filled with 'managed' sounds, i.e. music, or 'unmanaged' sounds, i.e. noise, are yet to receive the attention they deserve from MOS scholars (but see Korczynski, 2003). In this context, Shortt's (2013) piece of research discussed below constitutes a notable exception and suggests that we could learn much more about organizational life if investigation of organizational 'soundscapes' in combination with an exploration of the physical environment became a more frequently undertaken endeavour (see also Adams & Bruce, 2008; Korczynski, 2007; Korczynski & Jones, 2006; Raimbault & Dubois, 2005).

Throughout a nine months' long study with a broader focus on organizational space, materiality and identity construction, Shortt (2013) analysed the 'auditory routines' in hairdressing salons. The participants included 42 hairdressers working in five salons, of differing sizes and catering

for different types of clientele, in the UK. The empirical approach relied on the use of visual methods, specifically participant-led photography, whereby the researcher handed out disposable cameras to the participants and asked them to take up to 12 photographs each that ‘said something about who you are at work’ (Shortt, 2013, p. 348). In addition, the researcher took fieldnotes throughout the data collection process. Participants were instructed to take the photographs over a period of three days. Subsequently, the photographs were developed and the resulting analogue images were used as a vehicle for ‘photo-elicitation’ during semi-structured individual interviews with the participants. During the interviews, the researcher encouraged the participants to elaborate on the photographs they had taken, and discussed with them why they had taken a particular photograph, what a given image represented, and what experiences, meanings, memories and stories the participant associated with it. The interviews as well as some of the fieldnotes were transcribed and coded. In the process of data analysis, sound emerged as a significant theme. The content of the empirical material made the researcher realize that sound was of great importance to those working in hairdresser salons, and prompted her to focus in the analysis on the auditory landscape of hairdressers’ work.

Shortt’s (2013) study demonstrates how sounds are subjectively experienced by individuals in organizations and how, regardless of whether specific aspects of the workplace soundscape – such as the sound of traffic in a busy street outside the salon or the sound of water running down a wash basin – would be commonly labelled as pleasant or unpleasant, fulfil a particular function and are attributed meanings by the workers. To a large extent, sounds were deployed by the participants in order to enable ‘tuning out’ of the workplace surroundings and ‘tuning into’ a space that became more personal and private. This process of ‘tuning out’ offered an escape from and constituted an antidote to the oftentimes

strenuous emotional labour hairdressers are required to engage in.

It is worth pointing out that Shortt’s (2013) exploration of the importance of the *auditory* experience of organizational life relied on the application of *visual* methods, although throughout the research process the researcher experienced and took notes addressing the multisensory dimensions of the hairdressers’ salons she studied: smells, sounds, tastes and the visual landscape – all of which encompassed the aesthetics of the participants’ working lives, and her own aesthetic experience of the fieldwork sites. In this way, among being exposed to a plethora of sensory stimuli in the salons, she had first-hand knowledge of the sounds accompanying hairdressers’ work. Sounds were also a recurring theme in the interviews. Shortt’s (2013) study draws attention to the importance of exploring organizational soundscapes and shows that there is ample scope for developing research methods that would be best suited for capturing the aesthetic experience of organizational life beyond the discursive and – to a lesser extent – the visual.

Representing Organization Through Art

Rippin’s (2013b) research discussed below is an example of a different – compared to Shortt (2013) – multisensory approach to investigating the aesthetic in MOS, and represents the use of arts-based methods in studying organizations. She adopts the aesthetic lens to explore two important questions. First, elegantly bringing together simplicity and complexity, she asks: ‘where are organizations?’ (Rippin, 2013b, p. 1551). Stating that ‘they exist in our experience of them’ (ibid.), she then poses her second question: ‘how can we represent that diffuse and fragmented experience so that the rest of the community of inquiry can understand and potentially work with it?’ (Rippin, 2013b, p. 1552). Rippin points to the rarely acknowledged

issue that locating an organization presents a difficulty, as organizations are encountered in manifold ways: through our experiences of their products, services, brands and logos, the buildings that accommodate their offices and the call centres they set up, their online presence, the people who work for them, and the various documents and marketing materials they produce. As a research method suitable for representing the experience of organization, Rippin (2013b) proposes an art- or studio-based approach. In developing the method, she draws on Dewey's ideas on the connection between experience, art and community, contained in his highly influential work on aesthetics *Art as Experience*, originally published in 1934, as well as Barrett and Bolt's (2010) theory about art as research.

Rippin uses the studio-based method to represent her nearly 40-year experience of one organization – The Body Shop – which she had encountered at three points in life: as an adolescent and customer/consumer growing up in Nottingham in the late 1970s, as a researcher on a three-year project within the organization in Littlehampton in the 1990s, and as an academic at Bristol University in the early 2010s, where she spent a considerable amount of time reflecting on the company, of which by then she was neither a customer nor internally employed researcher. The particular approach Rippin (2013b, p. 1553) designed to investigate her relationship with The Body Shop involved making a textile map, with the purpose of 'locating the experiences, physically and emotionally, which make up the organization for [her]'. A significant aspect of understanding the process of locating and reflecting on experiences of organization through quilt making, argues Rippin (2013b), rests in the realization that there exists an analogy between the dialogue the artist enters into with the object she makes, and the dialogue the stakeholder enters into with the organization she encounters. Since making art allows for registering that which had previously been overlooked, when the object of art refers to matters

related to organizations, such an approach makes it possible to arrive at insights valuable for organizational scholars. In Rippin's (2013b) case of quilt making, the crafting of art objects engages in particular the senses of sight and touch (for comparison, see Koelsch's (2012) discussion of (virtual) quilt making as a metaphor for qualitative research). Following Barrett and Bolt (2010), this process of research through art making involves two key elements. First, there is *revelation*, whereby insights are gained and new knowledge is produced. Revelation is succeeded by *exegesis*, whereby both the process of art making and the knowledge it has generated are given an analytical written account.

To produce the quilt representing Rippin's relationship with The Body Shop and its founder Anita Roddick, it took the artist-researcher nine months. The quilt consists of a number of panels, three of which correspond to the locations that the researcher associates with The Body Shop:

Nottingham has the excitement of being an adolescent girl caught up in 1970s feminism and women like Anita becoming the sisters who were doing it for themselves, iconic and inspirational to a generation of women entrepreneurs. Arundel and Littlehampton were replete with experiences of fieldwork encounters, including the time on the production line, and meeting Anita, and being part of a research team of very powerful women academics. Bristol has recently been the site of encounters of a much older and wiser self with a company which now has become an object of study rather than infatuation. From this, the quilt can be understood as a record of geographical locations, pinpointing where The Body Shop had a material presence, but also as a map of my experiences of that company, a significant part of which exists inside me as a series of stored experiences available to be instantiated into art for 'the enjoyed receptive perception' (Dewey, 2005 [1934], p. 49) of organization studies scholars. (Rippin, 2013b, p. 1561)

In inquiring into the possibility of conducting organizational research through art-based methods, Rippin (2013b) urges researchers to take up the challenge of not limiting their exercise in artistic expression to well-crafted

writing but also to attempt to *create* art objects. She argues for normalization of art as research, pointing out that this would be particularly beneficial within organization studies since making art ‘is a process of organized life when faced with something important, significant, meaningful, in order to communicate insights about these events to the community’ (Rippin, 2013b, p. 1555), including the community of organization studies scholars (see also Biehl-Missal, 2015).

CONCLUSION

As we encounter the world through the senses, our experience, including that of organizational life is of an aesthetic nature. Yet, representations of organizational world and life that take sensory knowledge into account are still somewhat on the margins of MOS research. While a lot has been accomplished since Corbett’s (2006) call for a ‘re-awakening’ of organizational researchers’ senses, there is still more to be done. As this chapter has demonstrated, existing research into the aesthetic aspects of organization has not proceeded according to one fixed model; the methodological repertoire for studying the aesthetic is dynamic, and new perspectives and orientations are constantly unfolding.

For this exploration to be productive, reflection is required on several important questions about the future of research on the aesthetic in management and organization. On a very basic level, we must ask which sensory realms we ought to investigate in our empirical efforts. So far, the only relatively mature area within studies of the aesthetic in organizational life has been research focusing on the visual. In the context of qualitative MOS research, the interest in the visual has helped us move away from the dominance of the semi-structured interview and an over-reliance on the discursive in charting and interpreting the experience of organizational

life. Research that engages senses other than sight, however, has been much less widespread and it is clear that we are yet to witness a move towards a greater ‘sensory equilibrium’ (Classen, 1993) in MOS. While it has been acknowledged that a competence in interpreting visual data, also referred to as ‘videocy’ (Bell & Davison, 2013; Denzin, 1991) has increased in importance for organizational researchers, a corresponding importance of such competence has not to date been extended over other senses.

At present, we are at a point where there is still scope for addressing organizational life as experienced through a singular sense in order to restore the imbalances between the primacy of that which is discernible through sight and that which is experienced through other senses. We need to be mindful, though, that – as senses are ‘entangled’ (Mason & Davies, 2009) – even if analytically useful, an approach addressing one particular sense in isolation from others is artificial. In this context, future studies should build on the existing developments in multisensory research, as represented by Rippin’s (2013b) and Shortt’s (2013) studies discussed earlier, and offer accounts of organizational life that take account of that which can be heard, seen, smelled, tasted and touched.

Another key question refers to how we can access the aesthetic experience of organizational life. Existing work shows that to an extent, the aesthetic aspects of organization can be experienced and reported by the researcher. There is, however, a limit to ‘imaginative participant observation’ (Strati, 1999, p. 14) in that the researcher’s ability to find out ‘what it’s like to work here’ is constrained by her or his outsider status and fragmentary knowledge of organizational politics and the meanings organizational members attribute to different facets of being part of the organization. Hence, a lot must be said for conducting studies – such as Shortt’s (2013) – that privilege the perspectives of organizational actors over that of the researcher. In carrying out such studies, the researchers need

to be careful to move beyond using the aesthetic, for example the visual, as a vehicle for accessing linguistic data – as tends to be the case with techniques relying on ‘visual elicitation’ (Bell & Davison, 2013) – and to seek a more comprehensive way of engaging with the embodied experience of organizational life, by drawing on methods that engage and generate knowledge about other senses.

An answer to the question about how to access the aesthetic experience thus also involves consideration of which methods are the most suitable for addressing the senses. As researchers strive to ‘switch on’ their senses and to encourage research participants to do the same, Mason and Davies (2009) caution against adopting a sensory methodology rooted in a doctrine of literally ‘matching methods’ whereby, for example, the visual is only investigated through visual methods. As there is no straightforward correspondence between the aesthetic experience and the research method employed to gain an insight into it, they call for the development of creative methods that acknowledge the entanglement of the senses and that show – as also demonstrated in Shortt’s (2013) piece discussed in this chapter – how empirical methods mobilizing a particular sense can afford us access to that which is experienced through other senses.

For moving forward with the current ‘state of art’ of research into the aesthetic of organizational life, it is also important to reflect on how we conduct the analysis of empirical material and how we represent the knowledge constructed on the basis of investigating the aesthetic. With regard to the former, taking a lead from sensory ethnography, it is necessary for organizational researchers reporting empirical findings to make it ‘explicit how fieldwork practices develop ... and how analytical techniques, processes and practices are developed and engaged to offer a new layer’ (Pink, 2013, p. 265) of reflexivity. With regard to the latter, at present, significant limitations are posed by academic publishing in that it remains biased towards conveying ‘words

and numbers’. It is high time for conventions of communication of academic knowledge to shift so that it becomes more multimodal and more closely engaged with the senses. There is a long way to go in this respect: after all, this very book chapter, addressing methods used in researching the aesthetic, is limited in its form to a set of black letters set against a white background – a far cry from a multimodal and multisensory approach to communication.

In order for aesthetic approaches to inject new life into business and management research, however, more is needed than the introduction of innovative methodologies for conducting research and communicating its findings. Crucial questions emerge revolving around issues such as: to what end should we conduct research into the aesthetic? What kind of organizations do we want to shape through this research? These beg reflection on how studies of the aesthetic can help us find new ways of conceptualizing organizations, organizing processes and organizational life. As the examples discussed in this chapter show, research into organizational aesthetics has moved away from considering aesthetics as limited to matters of art and beauty in an abstract sense, and has engaged with the embodied and emotional experience of organizational life and the social processes within the organization. However, the above questions highlight the need for critical studies that link the aesthetic to the political and the ethical, and for developing a ‘sensuous politics’ (Corbett, 2006) of organization that accounts for how bodies subordinated to organizational regimes also influence those regimes (Cutcher & Dale, 2012). In this context, it would be fruitful for future studies to connect to Rancière’s (2000/2006) project of challenging the politics of invisibility and voicelessness by critically exploring the ‘distribution of the sensible’ within the aesthetic regimes of organizations, and to extend it by making not only sight and hearing, but smell, touch and taste more present in analyses of the aesthetics of organizational life. Finally, there

is space and need for future sensory research in MOS to take up greater interest in sociological categories such as class, ethnicity and gender, in order to address issues of 'social justice' (Vannini et al., 2012) in the context of contemporary workplace organizations.

REFERENCES

- Ackerman, D. (1990) *A Natural History of the Senses*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Adams, N. and Bruce, N. (2008) 'Soundwalking as methodology for understanding soundscapes', *Proceedings of the Institute of Acoustics*, 30(2): 552–8.
- Amsteus, M., Liljegren, F., Markovic, S. and Månsson, M. (2016) 'Chocolate or succulent chocolate: The impact of sensory descriptions on choice', *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 7(6): 213–24.
- Barrett, E. and Bolt, B. (2010) (eds) *Practice as Research*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Baxter, L. F. and Ritchie, J. M. (2013) 'The sense of smell in researching a bakery', *International Journal of Work Organisation and Emotion*, 5(4): 369–83.
- Bell, E. and Davison, J. (2013) 'Visual management studies: Empirical and theoretical approaches', *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15(2): 167–84.
- Benjamin, W. (1969) 'Theses on the philosophy of history', in *Illuminations*. New York: Schocken Books, pp. 253–264.
- Beyes, T. (2016) 'Colour and organization studies', *Organization Studies*, published online on 5 October, DOI: 10.1177/0170840616663240.
- Beyes, T. and Steyaert, C. (2012) 'Spacing organization: Non-representational theory and performing organizational space', *Organization*, 19(1): 45–61.
- Biehl-Missal, B. (2015) '"I write like a painter": Feminine creation with arts-based methods in organizational research', *Gender, Work and Organization*, 22(2): 179–96.
- Böhme, G. (2003) 'Contribution to the critique of the aesthetic economy', *Thesis Eleven*, 73(1): 71–82.
- Bouilloud, J.-P. and Deslandes, G. (2015) 'The aesthetics of leadership: Beau Geste as critical behaviour', *Organization Studies*, 36(8): 1095–114.
- Bull, M. and Back, L. (2003) (eds) *The Auditory Culture Reader*. Oxford, UK: Berg.
- Bull, M. and Howes, D. (2016) 'Editorial: The expanding field of sensory studies', *The Senses and Society*, 11(1): 1–2.
- Butler, C. and Harris, J. (2015) 'Pills, ills and the ugly face of aesthetic labour: "They should've discriminated against me"', *Work, Employment and Society*, 29(3): 508–16.
- Carr, A. and Hancock, P. (2003) (eds) *Art and Aesthetics at Work*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave.
- Classen, C. (1993) *Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures*. London: Routledge.
- Classen, C. (2003) (ed.) *The Book of Touch*. Oxford, UK: Berg.
- Corbett, J. M. (2003) 'Sound organization: A brief history of psychosonic management', *ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organization*, 3(4): 265–76.
- Corbett, J. M. (2006) 'Scents of identity: Organisation studies and the cultural conundrum of the nose', *Culture and Organization*, 12(3): 221–32.
- Cutcher, L. and Dale, K. (2012) 'Introduction. Emotion and aesthetics: Organisational space, embodiment and materiality', *International Journal of Work, Organisation and Emotion*, 5(1): 1–5.
- Czarniawska-Joerges, B. and Guillet de Monthoux, P. (eds) (1994/2004) *Good Novels, Better Management: Reading Organizational Realities in Fiction*. Reading, UK: Harwood Academic Publishers.
- Dale, K. and Burrell, G. (2008) *The Spaces of Organisation and the Organisation of Space*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Davison, J. (2015) 'Visualising accounting: An interdisciplinary review and synthesis', *Accounting and Business Research*, 45(2): 121–65.
- Davison, J. and Warren, S. (2017) 'Visual methodologies for accounting and accountability', in Z. Hoque, L. D. Parker, M. A. Covalleski and K. Haynes (eds) *The Routledge Companion to Qualitative Accounting Research Methods*. London: Routledge.
- De Vita, G. and Case, P. (2016) 'The smell of the place: Managerialist culture in contemporary UK business schools', *Culture and Organization*, 22(4): 348–64.

- Denzin, N. K. (1991) *Images of Postmodern Society. Social Theory and Contemporary Cinema*. London: Sage.
- Dewey, J. (2005 [1934]) *Art as Experience*. New York: Perigee Books.
- Drobnick, J. (2006) (ed.) *The Smell Culture Reader*. Oxford, UK: Berg.
- Drobnick, J. and Fisher, J. (2008) 'Odor limits', *The Senses and Society*, 3(3): 349–58.
- Edwards, E. and Bhaumik, K. (2008) (eds) *Visual Sense: A Cultural Reader*. Oxford, UK: Berg.
- Estés, C. (1995) *Women Who Run with The Wolves*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Gadoua, M.-P. (2014) 'Making sense through touch: Handling collections with Inuit Elders at the McCord Museum', *The Senses and Society*, 9(3): 323–41.
- Gagliardi, P. (1990) 'Artifacts as pathways and remains of organizational life', in P. Gagliardi (ed.) *Symbols and Artifacts: Views of the Corporate Landscape*. Berlin: de Gruyter, pp. 3–38.
- Guillet de Monthoux, P. (2004) *The Art Firm: Aesthetic Management and Metaphysical Marketing*. Berkeley, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Hancock, P. (2003) 'Aestheticizing the world of organization: Creating beautiful untrue things', in A. Carr and P. Hancock (eds) *Art and Aesthetics at Work*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, pp. 174–94.
- Hancock, P. (2011) 'Aesthetics', in M. Tadajewski, P. Maclaran, E. Parsons and M. Parker (eds) *Key Concepts in Critical Management Studies*. London: Sage, pp. 11–15.
- Hancock, P., Sullivan, K. and Tyler, M. (2015) 'A touch too much: Negotiating masculinity, propriety and proximity in intimate labour', *Organization Studies*, 36(12): 1715–39.
- Hansen, H., Ropo, A. and Sauer, E. (2007) 'Aesthetic leadership', *Leadership Quarterly*, 18(6): 544–60.
- Homburg, C., Schwemmler, M. and Kuehnl, C. (2015) 'New product design: Concept, measurement, and consequences', *Journal of Marketing*, 79(3): 41–56.
- Howes, D. and Classen, C. (1991) 'Conclusion: Sounding sensory profiles', in D. Howes (ed.) *The Varieties of Sensory Experience: A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, pp. 257–88.
- Howes, D. and Classen, C. (2014) *Ways of Sensing: Understanding the Senses in Society*. London: Routledge.
- Hurdley, R. and Dicks, B. (2011) 'In-between practice: Working in the "thirdspace" of sensory and multimodal methodology', *Qualitative Research*, 11(3): 277–92.
- Johnson, R. A. (1993) *The Fisher King and the Handless Maiden*. San Francisco, CA: Harper.
- Kavanagh, D. (2004) 'Ocularcentrism and its others: A framework for metatheoretical analysis', *Organization Studies*, 25(3): 445–64.
- Koelsch, L. E. (2012) 'The virtual patchwork quilt: A qualitative feminist research method', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 18(10): 823–29.
- Koivunen, N. and Wennes, G. (2011) 'Show us the sound!: Aesthetic leadership of symphony orchestra conductors', *Leadership*, 7(1): 51–71.
- Korczynski, M. (2003) 'Music at work: Towards a historical overview', *Folk Music Journal*, 8(3): 314–34.
- Korczynski, M. (2007) 'Music and meaning on the factory floor', *Work and Occupations*, 34(3): 253–89.
- Korczynski, M. and Jones, K. (2006) 'Instrumental music? The social origins of broadcast music in British factories', *Popular Music*, 25(2): 145–64.
- Korsmeyer, C. (2005) (ed.) *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*. Oxford, UK: Berg.
- Krishna, A. (2010) (ed.) *Sensory Marketing: Research on the Sensuality of Products*. New York: Routledge.
- Lammer, C. (2007) 'Bodywork: Social somatic interventions in the operating theatres of invasive radiology', in S. Pink (ed.) *Visual Interventions: Applied Visual Anthropology*. Oxford, UK: Berghahn Books, pp. 91–116.
- Land, C. and Šliwa, M. (2009) 'The novel and organization', *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 22(4): 349–56.
- Low, K. E. Y. (2005) 'Ruminations on smell as a socio-cultural phenomenon', *Current Sociology*, 53(3): 397–417.
- Manalansan IV, M. F. (2006) 'Immigrant lives and the politics of olfaction in the global city', in J. Drobnick (ed.) *The Smell Culture Reader*. Oxford, UK: Berg, pp. 41–52.
- Marcus, G. E. and Fischer, M. M. J. (1986) *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An*

- Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Mason, J. and Davies, K. (2009) 'Coming to our senses? A critical approach to sensory methodology', *Qualitative Research*, 9(5): 587–603.
- Paterson, M. and Dodge, M. (2012) *Touching Space, Placing Touch*. Farnham, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing.
- Patrick, V. M. (2016) 'Everyday consumer aesthetics', *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 10: 60–4.
- Phillips, B. J. (2016) 'The scrapbook as an autobiographical memory tool', *Marketing Theory*, 16(3): 325–46.
- Pink, S. (2013) *Doing Visual Ethnography*. 3rd ed. London: Sage.
- Pink, S. (2015) *Doing Sensory Ethnography*. 2nd ed. London: Sage.
- Raimbault, M. and Dubois, D. (2005) 'Urban soundscapes: Experiences and knowledge', *Cities*, 22(5): 339–50.
- Rancière, J. (2000/2006) *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*. London: Continuum.
- Riach, K. and Warren, S. (2015) 'Smell organization: Bodies and corporeal porosity in office work', *Human Relations*, 68(5): 789–809.
- Rippin, A. (2013a) 'The human touch versus 'silver-handedness': The importance of the haptic in organisational life', *International Journal of Work Organisation and Emotion*, 5(4): 357–68.
- Rippin, A. (2013b) 'Putting The Body Shop in its place: A studio-based investigation into the new sites and sights of organization as experience', *Organization Studies*, 34(10): 1551–62.
- Ropo, A. and Sauer, E. (2007) 'Corporeal leaders', in D. Barry and H. Hansen (eds) *The SAGE Handbook of New Approaches in Management and Organization*. London: Sage, pp. 469–78.
- Ropo, A., Sauer, E. and Salovaara, P. (2013) 'Embodiment of leadership through material place', *Leadership*, 9(3): 378–95.
- Shortt, H. (2013) 'Sounds of the salon: The auditory routines of hairdressers at work', *International Journal of Work Organisation and Emotion*, 5(4): 342–56.
- Sinclair, A. (2005) 'Body possibilities in leadership', *Leadership*, 1(4): 387–406.
- Soars, B. (2009) 'Driving sales through shoppers' sense of sound, sight, smell and touch', *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 37(3): 286–98.
- Sontag, S. (2003) *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Penguin.
- Sørensen, B. M. (2010) 'St Paul's conversion: The aesthetic organization of labour', *Organization Studies*, 31: 307–26.
- Sørensen, B. M. (2013) 'The method of juxtaposition. Unfolding the visual turn in organization studies', in E. Bell, S. Warren and J. E. Schroeder (eds) *The Routledge Companion to Visual Organization*. New York: Routledge, pp. 46–63.
- Sørensen, B. M. (2014) 'Changing the memory of suffering: An organizational aesthetics of the dark side', *Organization Studies*, 35(2): 279–302.
- Strati, A. (1992) 'Aesthetic understanding of organizational life', *Academy of Management Review*, 17(3): 568–81.
- Strati, A. (1999) *Organization and Aesthetics*. London: Sage.
- Strati, A. (2000) 'The aesthetic approach in organization studies', in S. Linstead and H. Höpfl (eds) *The Aesthetics of Organizing*. London: Sage, pp. 13–34.
- Taylor, S. and Hansen, H. (2005) 'Finding form: Looking at the field of organizational aesthetics', *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(6): 1211–30.
- Taylor, S. and Ladkin, D. (2009) 'Understanding arts based methods in managerial development', *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 8(1): 55–69.
- van Marrewijk, A., Broos, M. (2012) 'Retail stores as brands: Performances, theatre and space', *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 15(4): 374–91.
- Vannini, P., Waskul, D and Gottschalk, S. (2012) *The Senses in Self, Society, and Culture: A Sociology of the Senses*. London: Routledge.
- Vermetten, E. and Bremner, J. D. (2003) 'Olfaction as a traumatic reminder in posttraumatic stress disorder: Case reports and review', *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 64(2): 202–7.
- Warhurst, C. and Nickson, D. (2007) 'Employee experience of aesthetic labour in retail and

- hospitality', *Work, Employment and Society*, 21(1): 103–20.
- Warhurst, C., Nickson, D., Witz, A. and Cullen, A. M. (2000) 'Aesthetic labour in interactive service work: Some case study evidence from the "new" Glasgow', *The Service Industries Journal*, 20(3): 1–18.
- Warren, S. (2008) 'Empirical challenges in organizational aesthetics research: Towards a sensual methodology', *Organization Studies*, 29(4): 559–80.
- Waskul, D. and Vannini, P. (2008) 'Smell, odor, and somatic work: Sense making and sensory management', *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 71(1): 53–71.
- Welsch, W. (1997) *Undoing Aesthetics*. London: Sage.
- Wood, M. (2011) 'Lines of flight: Everyday resistance along England's backbone', *Organization*, 18(4): 517–39.

Sewing in Management and Organisation Research: The Subversive Stitch and the Politics of Cloth Revisited

Ann Rippin and Paula Hyde

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores how sewing, as a method (creative medium) for and subject of management research, can be analysed as research data – as case studies in organisational research, as gendered labour, as a metaphor for perishable aspects of organisational life and as illustrative art forms – to inform our understanding of organisations and to develop theory. The art of sewing is interwoven with ideas of femininity and it is a complicated task to separate the threads of women's lived experience from the practice of sewing. We have not sought to separate the two. However, rather than being about feminism or gender per se, this chapter addresses sewing as a form of arts-based method in management research; specifically, as a medium to explore and critique management and organisations.

Production and work with cloth has been a powerful economic force and, beyond formal work, sewing continues as a partly hidden

community activity among women. Yet, sewing also offers the chance to present something powerful and oppositional – from the banners supporting female suffrage to radical feminist art pieces such as *The Dinner Party* (Chicago, 1979). As such, sewing is of considerable interest as a source of interpretation and illustration of organisational and social experience. Moreover, sewing has great potential as a source of ideas and evidence for theory development and testing. Finally, it enables us to remain open to many different interpretations reflecting the ambiguity of the social phenomena we study.

In exploring the potential for sewing in management and organisation research, we begin the chapter by considering the interwoven history of femininity and sewing. We examine sewing in art and community activity before examining the significance of sewing in our lives and our research. The varied examples we present illustrate a variety of means of engaging with management and organisations through sewing.

SEWING AND THE MAKING OF THE FEMININE

Production of and work with cloth has been an enormous economic force and its perishable nature has mirrored and exacerbated the hidden economic contributions of women throughout history. For example, published in 1984 and based on painstaking research, Elizabeth Wayland Barber's book *Women's Work: The First 20,000 Years*, challenged contemporary historians as it extended the history of woven cloth and women's economic involvement in sewing by a considerable period of time to some 20,000 years.

Sewing has become almost inseparable from associations with feminism or femininity, but this has not always been the case (Rippin, 2015, 2005). Rozsika Parker's critically acclaimed historical study, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (1984), (to which our title refers) traced the decline in the status of embroidery from a major art form practised by men and women in the Middle Ages to a lesser art form which was specifically feminine and domestic by the nineteenth century. Associated to this was her study of 'sweated labour'; the sewing done by working women. She detailed the historical 'hierarchical division of the arts into fine arts and craft as a major force in the marginalisation of women's work' (p. xii). Sewing as a form of women's work was not only marginalised but working with cloth also played a central role in managing women's lives, for example, in reinforcing Victorian ideals of femininity. And before the Victorian era, the church was implicated in corralling embroidery as a powerful force in the domestication of women. Not least in cementing the importance of female silence, chastity and purity in seeking to control women's reproduction. Sewing has been instrumental in reinforcing notions of femininity.

The work of second-wave feminism in the USA and Europe in the 1970s and early 1980s revealed and represented women's

contributions to history not only through sewing but also through literature. Many 'women writers, poets and artists whose work had been marginalized and forgotten by the canonical process' were rediscovered (Phillips & Rippin, 2010, p. 283). The social processes through which women are erased from history have been written about in engaging ways. For example, Joanna Russ's satirical account of the loss of women to literature, outlines the absurdist social process through which women disappear from the record:

In a nominally egalitarian society the ideal situation (socially speaking) is one in which the members of the 'wrong' groups have the freedom to engage in literature (or equally significant activities) and yet do not do so, thus proving that they can't. But, alas, give them the least real freedom and they *will* do it. The trick thus becomes to make the freedom as nominal as possible and then – since some of the so-and-so's will do it anyway – develop various strategies for ignoring, condemning or belittling the artistic work that result. If properly done, these strategies result in a social situation in which the 'wrong' people are (supposedly) free to commit literature, art or whatever, but very few do, and those who do (it seems) do it badly, so we can all go home to lunch. (Russ, 1983, pp. 4–5, emphasis original)

Recognising the marginalisation of women in history and following an extended search for forgotten but significant women in the arts, politics, religion, Judy Chicago conceived a collaborative art installation. It was produced by more than 400 women and men titled *The Dinner Party* (1979). This installation can be viewed as a case study of women's changing power in society over time. She described her excitement at discovering so many inspirational women, and her sense of obligation in representing them and their achievements to a wider audience:

I have brought these women together – invited them to dinner, so to speak, in order that we might hear what they have to say and see the range and beauty of our heritage, a heritage we have not yet had an opportunity to know. (Chicago, 1979, p. 52)

Each of the 39 place settings has a sewn component. They commemorate particular historically important women and the plates sit on embroidered runners stitched in the style and technique of each woman's time (Parker, 2010, p. 209). The purpose of the sewn runners was to reveal something about 'the quality of their lives and their relationship to needlework' (Chicago in Parker, 2010, p. 209). The relationship between plates and runners is symbolic. Taken in chronological order, the embroidery on the runners extends from the periphery (for women in antiquity) until it encroaches on the plates representing: 'a metaphor for the increasing restrictions on women's power that occurred in the development of Western history ... occasionally there is enormous visual tension between the plate and its runner as a symbol of the woman's rebellion against the constraints of the female role' (Chicago in Parker, 2010, p. 210).

Sewing as an art form, an occupation and a socially significant activity is, therefore, of considerable interest as a source of interpretation and as an illustration of organisational and social experience. As a source of ideas and evidence for theory development and testing, however, sewing has much greater potential.

SEWING AS A SOURCE FOR CREATIVE AND CRITICAL RESEARCH

In their book on organisational research methods, Alan Bryman and David Buchanan (2009) argue for the 'development of further fresh insights based on increasingly creative combinations of traditional and novel research methods' (p. 705). Sewing, we argue, offers a creative vehicle for management and organisation research.

[T]he distinctive character of creative research [is] to show how the process of material thinking enables us to think differently about our human situation, and by displaying in tangible but non-reductive form its inevitable complexity, to demonstrate the

great role works of art can play in the ethical project of becoming (collectively and individually) oneself in a particular place. Neither is this in the least a solipsistic benefit. To understand how identities form, how relationships with others are actively invented (and therefore susceptible to reinvention), is essential knowledge if societies are to sustain themselves. (Carter, 2004, p. xii)

By this reading, sewing presents a means of embodying ambiguity, for example, in relation to organisations. Sewn exhibits are able to illustrate, for example, 'the fragmented and often schizophrenic nature of organizations; the public-facing efficiency machine versus the internal shambles, or the values-driven public strategy versus the shareholder-values imperative' (Rippin, 2015, p. 114). Sewing offers a means of making visible the performative processes that create organisational experience and it enables us to take seriously the importance of material objects in our scholarship. Peter Reason and John Rowan (1981) describe this as an extended epistemology, where a variety of forms of knowing are valued. 'Propositional knowledge with which we are familiar is present and valued, but so too is presentational knowledge, subtle, embodied, often pre-linguistic knowledge that has to be expressed through gesture, sound, artefact' (Rippin, 2015, p. 113).

In relation to management research in particular, sewing can be used as a means of organisation examination and analysis. *Nike Quilt* is an example of the use of the quilted form to critique the arrogant masculinity of Nike (see Figure 22.1). The making of the piece was initially described as a tool for thinking before being exhibited in its own right.

Figure 22.2 shows one of several hangings from a quilted exploration of leadership at Marks and Spencer called *Waiting for the Warrior*.¹ The piece hinted at the potential for foundation myths to run to the core of organisational functioning (Rippin & Fleming, 2006). The quilt portrayed a critique of patriarchal lineage as a form of legitimate

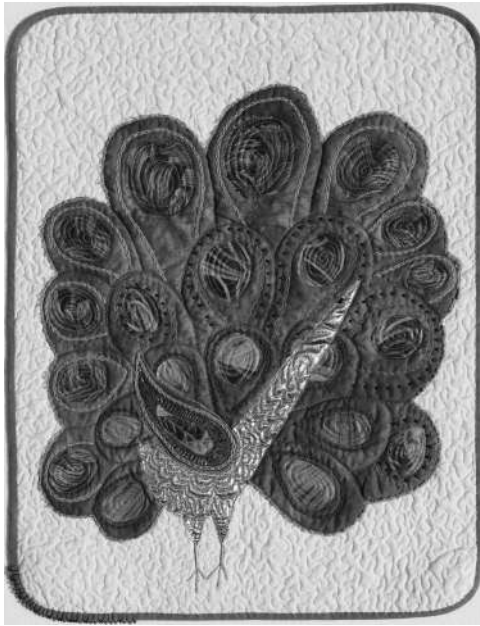


Figure 22.1 *Nike Quilt*, Ann Rippin, 2002

leadership succession (after early versions of the folk story *Sleeping Beauty*). In reference to events at Marks and Spencer, Rippin (2005)

argues that 'violent, hyper-masculine behaviour creates and maintains a destructive cycle of leadership lionisation and failure at the company which precludes a more feminine and possible more effective construction of change management' (Rippin, 2005, p. 578).

In reflecting on the content of and reactions to the finished work Ann has written:

I use the medium probably most associated with the feminine, stitching, to critique the hyper-masculinity of leadership as domination. A leadership style which is achieved through being the last man [sic] standing in knock-down arguments about policy, direction, strategy. At the same time as the yearning for strong leadership, messianic dependency in Bion's terms (1961), there was a strong desire for protection from the prowling hostile bidder, Philip Green. Attack and defence were needed simultaneously in one individual, a set of requirements one person, man or woman, was unlikely to be able to fulfil well. The quilt with its long associations with protection and padding under armour, the protection in battle, is the perfect metaphor for this set of dual demands on leadership. The quilts are in places hard and shiny as well as soft and comforting. They mother and father at the same time. It might be pushing it a bit, but this monstrous hybridity of the maternal and the paternal, the feminine and the masculine



Figure 22.2 Part of the exhibit *Waiting for the Warrior*, Ann Rippin, 2004

in one object, along with the deliberately used haberdashery from women's underwear and the sexual connotations thereto, might account for the reaction the pieces got including trivialisation and confusion, and delight and desire. (2005, p. 578)

Studies using feminist research methods, collaborative and participatory research and the coproduced outcomes that arise (Burns et al., 2014; Coleman & Rippin, 2000) are all substantial parts of the organisation of sewing as a form of management research. The outputs portray ambiguity and remain open to further critical interpretations. Attention to the feminine activity of sewing indicates how stitching and cloth embody the political and can subvert or question conventional thinking. Thus, we argue, sewing offers a rich potential for insights into management and organisation.

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT: SEWING, WOMEN AND ORGANISATION HISTORY

One of the more controversial books on quilting is *Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad* (Tobin & Dobard, 2000). Tobin and Dobard argued that quilts provided a handbook for escaping slaves in America in the nineteenth century. The named designs included coded information on safe houses, directions, what to wear, what to pack, when to be ready to depart and so on. Quilts, which were frequently aired on washing lines and which were, therefore, a common sight on plantations and around private houses, could be displayed to signal this information to illiterate slaves. The information was therefore hidden in plain view: the meaning only became apparent if you knew the code. This is a fascinating, contested and nonetheless, romantic story. The quilting community remains divided: some love the romance, others detest the conjecture. What the book does illustrate clearly though, is this association between needlework and the hidden.

In concert with the representation of women in history generally, women are equally hidden in management and organisation history (Phillips & Rippin, 2010). Rowlinson (2009) notes that in business history, other than brief references to the roles played by women in family business, gender is conspicuous by its absence. Indeed, many varieties of feminist theory from liberal to post-structural, articulate a range of critiques of formal organisations and their relative inaccessibility to women (Calás & Smircich, 1996). This element of the hidden is important in sewing, where there are many attempts at invisibility: invisible mending, darning and hemming. The process of what and how things are hidden is also important.

Relating to the notion of hidden actors in society, Gibson-Graham and colleagues (Gibson-Graham, 1996, Gibson-Graham et al., 2013) developed their concept of hidden economies; a set of alternative economies, commonly referred to as their iceberg model. They argue that only the paid, waged economy is of interest to conventional social scientists, primarily economists and that this economy forms the tip of the visible iceberg. Underneath the waterline is the massive bulk of economic (value-creating) economies such as the gift, illegal, co-operative, bartering and unpaid economies. This includes intra-family work such as child care and elder care, which enables others to join in above the waterline economy. Also below the waterline is charitable and voluntary work.

Sewing fits in perfectly with this underground or underwater work, which is invisible within GDP calculations. Women organise tirelessly to produce clothes for children in the developing world, items for raffle, knee quilts for military amputees, incubator covers for premature babies, quilts for refugees and so on. As women stitch, usually in groups for this kind of activity, they develop their political awareness and therefore begin to engage in a kind of resistance to the status quo. An example of this is the work done with a quilting group in Bristol to raise funds via a raffle

quilt for a sex workers' support group in the city. What mattered, as much as the funds raised, was the coming together of the two groups who would never normally mix and the enhanced understanding certainly on the side of the quilters. This is a theme picked up by Parker:

Embroidery is still identified with femininity, but the framework has changed. Women have challenged the constraints of femininity and entered previously masculine preserves. On the whole women no longer embroider as a gesture of wifely or domestic duty. But the aspect of embroidery as a bond between women has lived on. Books, exhibitions, magazines and societies devoted to embroidery and dominated by women constitute a curiously autonomous female area. (Parker, 2010, p. 215)

Sewing continues as an almost hidden community activity, albeit one that brings a curiously autonomous female experience. It is one that nevertheless, observes and critiques organisational activity. For example, Dorothy Russell, a quilt artist based on Anglesey, produced one example of this community-based critique recently called *We Stand Surrounded by the Work of Thieves* (see Figure 22.3). The quilt formed part of a travelling exhibition called 'Connection', and including quilts produced by Cwilt Cymru. She wrote of this piece:

I was naïve enough to be horrified by the greed and corruption exposed during the financial 'crash'

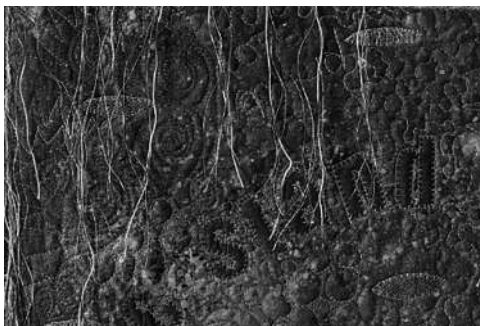


Figure 22.3 Close up showing part of *We Stand Surrounded by the Work of Thieves*, Dorothy Russell, 2014

within the banking sector. What makes it worse is that although massive sections of society have suffered because of the banking crisis, the people at the centre seem to be undisturbed as though at the 'eye of the storm', still wealthy, still greedy and still in control. Greed and corruption, of course, are not only evident in one sector of society, and stung by these thoughts and feeling impotent in the face of them, I set about responding through my work. The work is blue and understated, hiding its serpentine message in intertwining words which are subtle and need to be searched for in the same way that the manoeuvrings of the powerful are disguised and secretive. There are also words which appear in the background machine quilting, though many are difficult to decipher or simply illegible. Falling through the image are appliqué silver discs suggestive of coins. There are flashes of red in the painted/printed background and around the lettering. Red is used to symbolise danger or threat. The border is foundation pieced but with no apparent pattern or regimentation, and separating it from the centre is a confusion of couched threads, distracting the eye from the message within. (Russell, 2015)

In a different vein, Dorothy Russell's *Cross Purposes* (see Figure 22.4) was produced after listening to and reading news stories during the course of one day. She was frustrated by the oppositional and unspoken paradox of news programmes that presented, for example, a story about rising pollution followed by another concerning a new runway at Heathrow Airport and problems of obesity and food shortages. The quilt is roughly painted in sludgy colours in the horizontal and red threads are couched downwards surrounded by obscured or visible phrases from the news. The piece is decorated with sequins and beads to reflect a brighter light in association to the way news stories can be spun.

She said of the piece:

My response to hearing, via the news media, how much at cross-purposes are the actions of our various political and quasi-political bodies and how far we are from resolving most of the world's problems and inequities. Everything in the quilt is at cross-purposes. (Russell, 2015)

Rozsika Parker recognised a dual role for sewing, both as a weapon of resistance and a source of constraint for women. She also



Figure 22.4 *Cross Purposes*, Dorothy Russell, 2014

demonstrated how sewing simultaneously, ‘promoted submission to the norms of feminine obedience and offered both psychological and practical means to independence’ (Parker, 2010, p. xix). Parker’s book fed into second-wave feminist critiques with its focus on the use of embroidery as a medium for feminist consciousness-raising. It recognised the ambivalence experienced in relation to embroidery, ‘understanding the medium as both an instrument of oppression and an important source of creative satisfaction’ (p. xii).

This potential to say something powerful and oppositional in cloth, in secret and in plain view, makes it a perfect medium for critical management research. These kinds of work are ambivalent and open to many different interpretations as are the social phenomena we study. The viewer (or toucher) is therefore invited to develop their own critical insights into the phenomenon under review through engagement with the mind and the senses. Moreover, and, perhaps, counterintuitively then, the use of sewing, a traditionally feminine occupation, as a method of inquiry

may prove to be more significant and durable as a form of management research – one concerned with not only the lives of women, but with lives of men and the organisational arrangements that involve and affect us all. The politics of cloth, hidden economies and organisation of the feminine are themes central to sewing in contemporary management research to date.

THE SUBVERSIVE STITCH AND THE POLITICS OF CLOTH REVISITED: WHAT WE DO WHEN WE SEW

One of Rozsika Parker’s serious but playful observations in *The Subversive Stitch* is that sewing in the Victorian household was frequently done in a domestic setting by the Angel in the House, quietly, with a bent head, individually in silence. According to her analysis, this suited the gendered imagination of Victorian society: silent, domesticated women, taught compliance by following a pattern with head meekly inclined, the perfect domestic angel. As Parker says, however, you never know what these women are actually thinking, or even plotting.

The laughter provoked by embroidery practised ‘out of place’ illustrates the strength of sexual divisions in society ... women have nevertheless sewn a subversive stitch – managed to make meanings of their own in the very medium intended to inculcate self-effacement. (Parker, 2010, p. 215)

Rozsika Parker, also a practising psychotherapist, argued that psychoanalytic theory presents a means of understanding how creativity fosters thought. In examining what happens when we sew, and quoting Margot Waddell, she suggests that creative activity invokes the psychoanalytic phenomenon of ‘containment’, ‘The art object promotes and expands mental capacities by offering a shape and containing structure for the transformation of emotional experience into recognisable form’ (Waddell in Parker, 2010, pp. xix–xx).

Parker expanded on this to say that the embroiderer ‘sees a positive reflection of herself in her work and, importantly, in the reception of her work by others’ (p. xx).

In preparation for writing this chapter, and, not least because it was our first collaboration, we undertook to develop the chapter on sewing in management research through epistolary, sewn and more traditional methods. The process began with a meeting at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, superficially billed as an opportunity to map out the chapter, but stimulated by the opportunity to view Cornelia Parker’s *Magna Carta (An Embroidery)* (2015). While not chosen for this reason, the location resonated with our task as the Whitworth housed one of two (simultaneous) Subversive Stitch exhibitions in 1988 (the other was held at the Cornerhouse, Manchester).

Cornelia Parker’s community project was created by taking a print of the Wikipedia page for the Magna Carta on its 800-year anniversary. The words were stitched by over 200 people with the main body produced by prisoners and many famous and/or distinguished people; for example, prisoners embroidered the word *freedom* and Jarvis Cocker embroidered the words *common people*. Pictures and other details were produced by members of The Embroiderers’ Guild. It was an interesting piece as it represented a community project that ‘connects us by both a simple means (*sewing*) and a highly complex one (*the internet*) to our ancestors’ (Cooke, 2015, Emphasis original). The work of embroidering was imbued with meaning and purpose beyond that encapsulated in the words and images in the finished piece, just as the Magna Carta held social meaning beyond the written terms it contained in subjecting everyone, regardless of status, to the law.

In reflecting on this exhibit, and in our written exchanges we considered hidden economies (Gibson-Graham, 2006) of work that are uncounted or invisible on national and organisational balance sheets. Also, we

discussed how women’s work, and sewing in particular, is both a solitary domestic and a communal pursuit, often part of the hidden economy. We discussed what happens to the feminine in organisations (and management schools in particular), what happens when we sew and the potential of sewing in management research. In refining the focus for the chapter, we began with our own interest in, reasons for, and experiences of sewing. This part of the research formed an epistolary activity linked to sewn pieces that we produced in isolation and subsequently exchanged. See extracts below.

For one of us (AR), sewing and arts-based methods were at the heart of her management research; at times an intensely personal activity, it formed the basis of a research method from which her critical management theory took shape (see extract in Box 22.1). For the other (PH), sewing was a separate and private activity, an alternative to her management research, closely associated with family, home, local textiles industry and being with women (see extract in Box 22.2).

The few who have been able to combine radical thought and sewing have been remarkably successful in delivering a powerful message; from the banners supporting female suffrage and the trades union movement to radical feminist art pieces such as *The Dinner Party* (Chicago, 1979). However, the ability to combine a public, academic, intellectual life with sewing is relatively rare. Rozsika Parker suggests ‘The categorical separation of femininity/embroidery from masculinity/professionalism is the outcome of Victorian success in preserving embroidery as the demarcator of women’s sphere’ (Parker, 2010, pp. 214–15). Although, many women and men sew, Rozsika Parker’s interviewees explained how sewing was incompatible with university life as one sociologist tells her, ‘I soon learned never to tell people I embroider’ (2010, p. 214). This opening foray into collaborative writing and sewing has created this chapter, a piece in text and picture.

Box 22.1 Extract 1. Ann Rippin on 'Why I sew?'

Part of my identity is in what I stitch. I am what I sew. It is a very natural activity for me. And yet, we both know the perils of using words like 'natural'. Of course it is not natural. It is no more natural for me to sew than anyone else. I have been constructed in my own mind, and now in the minds of several others, as a sewing woman. The connections between sewing and femininity are well-established. I used to keep a collection of paintings of women sewing. They were always lovely pictures. The woman was always in a quiet room in a comfortable chair, usually in a golden light, bent over her work, silent, self-contained, diligent, alone. There were often flowers in the room. Sometimes there was an open French window, possibly with a gentle breeze. I don't remember seeing pictures of Victorian seamstresses bent over their industrialised work, going snow blind from stitching crystal beads on ivory evening dresses, or just plain blind stitching jet beads on mourning clothes, having their food cut up into small squares by the owner of the business so that they would not have to slow down to eat their lunch, putting whiskey into tired eyes to sharpen weary blurred vision. Nothing romantic or sentimental about the lives of those women, whose choice was the drudgery of working on clothes for the rich, or, quite simply, going on the game.

As Rozsika Parker told us, 'To know the history of embroidery is to know the history of women'. Embroidery for the wealthy was an accomplishment, something to speed you onto the marriage market. Look what a lovely pair of slippers she has made. Look how daintily she embroidered that coverlet. For poor women in service it was all about making samplers at school in order to get them their place marking linen in the Big House. All those samplers we love so much represent so much schooling of women in the feminine arts in preparation for a lifetime of drudgery.

I sew as part of my research as a political act. I do it to insist that I stand in a long line of my sisters who made their living by it, just, exploited and weakened by it, and with whom I want to stand in solidarity. I do it because it is so firmly associated with the feminine. It is so counter to the masculine hegemony which holds sway in so many of the institutions which constitute my world. If I am serious about having a career in the academy, sewing is the last thing I should be doing. It is risible. It harks back to a time when women were stitching pantaloons for pianos to preserve everyone's blushes, although there seems to be precious little evidence that this ever really happened, and it sounds like yet another move to trivialise and discount silly women doing silly things in frilly domestic interiors. Really, you can't take them seriously if all they do is embroider tea cosies and spectacle cases.

I want to meet that stereotype head on and be a sewing woman who uses the sharp point of her needle as her preferred analytical instrument. I want to ally myself with the women who embroidered all those beautiful Trades Union banners. I want to make sewing a conduit for the truth just like Philomela and Penelope. I want to join with the Craftivist movement and make sewing a means of lobbying for social change, a means of drawing attention to things which metaphorically need mending.

SEWING IN MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION RESEARCH

In November 2013, the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), London held an exhibition exploring the legacy of three landmark events: the publication of Rozsika Parker's ground-breaking book *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (1984) and two Subversive Stitch exhibitions held at the Cornerhouse and Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester (1988). The V&A exhibition explored the contemporary politics of cloth and focused on activities of men and women that address global, social and ethical issues. Our chapter title nods to the V&A exhibition entitled *The Subversive Stitch*

Revisited: The Politics of Cloth as the exhibition examined cloth as a subversive strategy and highlighted radical, interventionist projects that questioned and challenged structures of power.

Women's work consisted largely of making perishables – especially food and clothing. So if we are to retrieve significant amounts of women's history, or the history of any evanescent occupation ... We need the skill to glean all surviving evidence and to wring out of it every last drop of information and useful analysis. (Barber, 1994, p. 286)

On a similar theme, Elizabeth Wayland Barber's (1984) research on the economic and social history of ancient textiles over the last 20,000 years was, as a result, able to provide an account of 'early women, their lives,

Box 22.2 Extract 2. Paula Hyde on 'Sewing apart from work?'

I have sewn periodically since being very young, but there have been very long gaps where I haven't sewn at all. I started sewing with scraps of fabric my mum brought home from work. I made crude hand sewn stuffed toys usually from my own simple ideas but sometimes using patterns for dolls that my grandma cut out of magazines.

Mum worked in a textiles factory in Stockport and for a birthday when I was about seven years old or so, she and her workmates clubbed together and got me a sewing box and filled it with cottons, needles, pins, scissors, tailor's chalk and all sorts of sewing equipment. Although I had to replace the sewing box a few years ago, I still have many of those cottons and bits of equipment. Over time, I have gathered small sewing heirlooms from friends and family. My sewing box contains my Grandma's old Bakelite pin box and folding scissors and my friend's grandma's 'roller-skate' pincushions. Soon after I was given the sewing box, I was allowed to use mum's electric Singer sewing machine and I got more adventurous with the things I made. Most memorably copying David Cassidy's flared-sleeve, t-shirt. Mum's factory made poor-quality, synthetic fabric so I made the t-shirt in a black-flecked, gold lamé. I never used a pattern. I used to copy around other clothes or just draw lines on fabric and cut out shapes. There were many, many mistakes – I made a pair of drainpipe cords from some cheap flares and could only get them over my heel by tugging hard and inching them slowly upwards. They were even harder to get off. I made lots of punk t-shirts too, usually on the evening I was going out. I'd finish the item, put it on and go out to see a live band. Happy days!

Looking back, I see that the long periods of my life where I haven't sewn are associated with obligation, doing my duty, working, looking after my family and/or being a bit adrift in life. Not particularly unhappy times but uncreative times. I've never really associated the idea of work with something enjoyable like sewing. When I sew, I am totally absorbed and usually really happy – full of creative ideas and free. When I research I am serious, hard-working, determined and careful. I'd now like to bring the two together without losing anything of both and I don't know whether that is possible. This is why I approached you – first to be my mentor so I can explore how I might incorporate sewing into my work and second as a kind of joint-venture – a chance to examine the possibilities and potential for sewing in management research.

The women in my family, who weren't retired, all worked full-time industrial/factory jobs too, so these activities took place in the evenings, holidays and at weekends. I've started to read the research about community economics by Gibson-Graham, the two Australian economists Ann mentioned and I see how the economic well-being of my large and not very well-off extended family was completely dependent on the products of unaccounted women's work such as crocheted blankets, knitted jumpers and recycled clothes. Now I make bed quilts for my family and though I invest them with meaning and memories, those meanings are known, largely, only to me.

their work, and their values, chiefly from the technological record of one major produce of women ... textiles' (p. 13). She produced a convincing and critical account of the effects on the women who made the cloth and clothing. Although archeologists and historians had previously claimed weaving to be a relatively recent innovation, she found, on the contrary, that weaving dated back far earlier:

I kept running across wonderful bits of information about the women – virtually always women – who produced these textiles and about the values that different societies put on the products and their makers ... stories that told of women's lives thousands of years ago ... we know much more than has gotten into the general literature about women's history ... glimpses of real women of all sorts – peasants, entrepreneurs, queens, slaves, honest souls, and crooks – good, bad, high and low. For

all the strangeness of their cultures, they seem refreshingly like us. (Barber, 1994, p. 12)

In contrast, we have offered description and analysis of a range of methodologies incorporating sewing. In the main, these styles have followed other arts-based methods in management research in being varied and applied. We have not only seen how researching sewing as an activity can reveal hidden aspects of social and organisational life but also how sewing can be employed as a critique in itself. As we noted early in the chapter, it is almost impossible to separate the association of sewing with women and many of our examples relate to the experiences and lives of women. However, we argue that the basis for considering its potential use in

organisational research goes beyond gender. Sewing offers opportunities in organisation and management research as a subject of research, a method, a means of analysis and a means of exposition.

The chapter has addressed sewing in management research at two main levels, research methodology and sociological analysis. For the former sewn pieces may appear initially appealing to organisational research in that it appears to promise an opportunity to represent ambiguity in rich data that remains wide open to interpretation – sewing in action research. Also methodologically, sewing seems to offer an alternative; an addition to, yet different from, other arts-based methods. The suggestion is that a sewn piece can add to the diversity and richness of data collected on, for example, work, occupation and organisational life. As such, there appears potential for sewing to contribute not least by providing more expressive images than can be obtained through some other research methods.

Taking the use of sewing beyond a solitary, domestic, female activity, we have argued that sewing can be viewed as theoretical propositions, case studies, critical analysis and a source of primary data which can be useful with regard to theory development and testing. Sewing has three advantages in this respect. First it can portray lived experience. Second, by exploring a variety of interpretations, sewing can help us to develop process theories of organisational phenomena. Third, the products of and narratives associated with sewing provide us with secondary interpretive data, with alternatives which we can contrast to our own personal and organisational circumstances. They present the viewer and the makers with cultural images, questions and dilemmas. Sewn products can be analysed as research data, as novel sources of ideas, insight and inspiration, combined with the potential for theory development and testing.

In summary, the rich and varied examples above illustrate various means of engaging with management with and through

sewing. We have explored how sewing, as a method for and subject of management research, can be analysed as research data – as case studies in organisational research, as gendered labour, as a metaphor for perishable aspects of organisational life and as illustrative art forms. Rather than being about feminism or gender necessarily, sewing provides a medium to explore and critique management and organisations. Paradoxically, the use of sewing, a traditionally feminine occupation, as a method of inquiry may be more durable in certain instances than other forms of management research.

Note

- 1 Awarded inaugural prize, 2004, 64th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, Atlanta, Georgia.

REFERENCES

- Barber, B.W. (1994) *Women's Work: The First 20,000 Years, Women, Cloth and Society in Early Times*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.
- Bion, W. (1961) *Experiences in Groups*. London: Tavistock.
- Bryman, A. and Buchanan, D.A. (2009) 'The present and futures of organizational research'. In Buchanan, D.A. and Bryman, A. (Eds) *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Research Methods*. London: Sage, pp 705–18.
- Burns, D., Hyde, P., Killeth, A., Poland, F. and Gray, R. (2014) 'Participatory organizational research: Examining voice in the co-production of knowledge', *British Journal of Management* 25(1), 133–44.
- Calás, M. and Smircich, L. (1996) 'From the women's point of view: Feminist approaches to organization studies'. In Clegg, S.R. Hardy, C. and Nord, W.R. (Eds) *Handbook of Organization Studies*. London: Sage, pp 218–58.

- Carter, P. (2004) *Material Thinking: The Theory and Practice of Creative Research*. Carlton, VI: Melbourne University Press.
- Chicago, J. (1979) *The Dinner Party: A Symbol of our Heritage*. Garden City, NY: Anchor/Doubleday.
- Coleman, G. and Rippin, A. (2000) 'Putting feminist theory to work: Collaboration as a means towards organizational change', *Organization* 7(4), 573–87.
- Cooke, R. (2015) 'Bedwyr Williams; Cornelia Parker review – Imagine you're a pebble...', *The Guardian*, 16 August, www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/aug/14/bedwyr-williams-whitworth-manchester-review-cornelia-parker-magna-carta, accessed 16 September 2015.
- Gibson-Graham, J.K. (1996) *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gibson-Graham, J.K., Cameron, J. and Healy, S. (2013) *Take Back The Economy: An Ethical Guide For Transforming Our Economies*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Parker, R. (2010) *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine*. London: I. B. Tauris (new edition of the 1984 book).
- Phillips, M. and Rippin, A. (2010) 'Striving to uncover a lost heritage: Reclaiming women in management and organization history', *Management and Organizational History* 5(3–4), 283–95.
- Reason, P. and Rowan, J. (eds) (1981) *Human Inquiry: A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research*. Chichester, UK: Wiley.
- Rippin, A. (2015) 'Feminine writing: Text as dolls, drag and ventriloquism', *Gender, Work and Organization* 22(2), 112–28.
- Rippin, A. (2005) 'Marks and Spencer: Waiting for the Warrior', *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 18(6), 578–93.
- Rippin, A. and Fleming, P. (2006) 'Brute force: Medieval foundation myths and three modern organizations', *Management and Organizational History* 1(1), 51–70.
- Rowlinson, M. (2009) 'The Oxford Handbook of Business History (review)', *Business History* 51(2), 292–4.
- Russell, D. (2015) 'Cross purposes', <http://dotrussell.co.uk/portfolio/cross-purposes/>, accessed 3 February 2016.
- Russell, D. (2014) 'We Stand Surrounded by the Work of Thieves' and 'Autumn – A Dirge', <https://dotrussell.co.uk/blog/we-stand-surrounded-by-the-work-of-thieves-and-autumn-a-dirge/>, accessed 19 November, 2017.
- Tobin, J. and Dobard, R. (2000) *Hidden in Plain View: A Secret History of Quilts and the Underground Railroad*. New York: Doubleday.

Netnography for Management and Business Research

Robert V. Kozinets

INTRODUCTION

Whether we are examining managers, employees, consumers, regulators, entrepreneurs, or any of the myriad of roles and players who populate business and management research, online interaction and experience is likely to play an important and increasing role in their daily experience of the world. Researchers interested in these areas may benefit from an understanding of netnography, a form of ethnographic research that has been adapted to the unique contingencies of technologically mediated social interaction.

Netnography is an approach to online research that was introduced to the fields of marketing and consumer research in 1996 (see Kozinets, 1997, 2012). The approach began to diffuse through marketing, business, and management fields about a decade later, as social media participation and platforms began to multiply. Although it originated in fields related to business and management, netnography is a broad-based study of online

social interaction and experience from a human perspective. It is founded in anthropology's epistemologies of participant-observation and that field's axiologies of cultural understanding, but, distinct from traditional varieties of ethnography, it relies heavily on technologically mediated and archived forms of communication and information.

The terms digital ethnography and online ethnography are general ones, nominally applied to reference a range of possible practices that engage with qualitative online data. Most often, but not always, these practices originate in a research position that combines participation with observation. Netnography is, like the term virtual ethnography (Hine, 2000), a more specific form of online ethnography. The use of such term connotes particular positions vis-à-vis the research enterprise and the practices used to realize its aims. Using the term netnography implies the use of a common understanding and a common set of standards for the conduct of online ethnography, as well as inclusion in a body

of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary work. Employing the established standards of netnography confers upon future studies a consistency and dependability they might not otherwise hold.

The approach of netnography is both specific and dynamic. Because it deals with a set of social fields that are in flux, for example the emergence of popular new social media apps such as Snapchat or non-commercial social networking sites such as Ello, the particular approaches of netnography must be subject to frequent revision. Nonetheless, netnography has an unchanging relation to its ethnographic orientations and aims. The term refers to a particular adaptation that links ethnography to the needs of contemporary research practice. We can therefore consider netnography to be a specific term relating to the adoption of a specific set of related ethnographic, data analysis, ethical and representational practices. These practices are, as with general online ethnographies, conducted using communications and information found and created through the Internet, including its mobile manifestations. In management studies, netnography has been overwhelmingly employed to understand the conversations, languages, online behaviors, and symbolic repertoires of different groups of interest. In particular, netnography has often been employed to understand particular consumer groups to serve the needs of marketing and consumer research.

Despite the predominance of application in marketing and consumer research, netnography can also be used to understand infrastructures, networks, groups, and any relevant constituent's online behaviors, and potentially inform us about many elements of their overall lifeworld. So for example, Rhazzali (2015, p. 164) uses netnography's participant-observational perspective and particular research practices to study 'online conversions to Islam' and finds that 'the logic of the web has an essential role in the construction of the religious message' (p. 179). This message customization involves a certain

customer-centricity that results in the tailoring of the message to the convert, so that a variety of different people with differing subject positions can be led to Islam. It also involves a certain capitalist advertising style, in that the religious converters employ 'tricks typical of promotional campaigns, such as highlighting the individual benefits of choosing Islam, or using testimonials as examples' (ibid.).

In another example, Bakken (2015) follows netnography's ethical guidelines, among others, in a morally difficult study of 'crypto-markets' such as Silk Road that exist online to sell and educate about black market goods such as illegal drugs. Linking scientific data to personal experience and understanding, Wu (2014) uses netnography to theorize how the massive amounts of biological data in the Gene Ontology are developed, maintained, and used by a consortium of biological information communities, mostly consisting of model organism databases. Using the specified criteria for netnographic site selection, Hartmann (2015) provides a netnography of guitar player and gardening online sites to show how consumption and production are articulated within the practices of everyday living. Adapting the technique to business usages while still staying true to its anthropological origins, Brem and Bilgram (2015) show how netnography can be used to identify lead users for innovation partnerships and co-creation initiatives. As this short listing demonstrates, netnography's uses are wide and deep, ranging from examinations of the online spread of religion and illegal drugs, to the practices and infrastructure of complex database use, to the furtherance of business partnerships and innovation insights. In using this methodological approach, a variety of different investigators tie their research into the network of other published netnographies by employing a specific type of participant-observation and its associated practices.

The particular practices are well established. Compared to other approaches, netnography is digitally native. Its observational elements offer a less intrusive research experience than

ethnography because they use unprompted data. Netnography is more naturalistic than personal interviews, focus groups, surveys, and experiments. Questions of ethics and consent are salient to netnography because it uses information that may not have been provided for the purpose of research. Oftentimes, netnography is used to investigate sensitive topics, making a cautious stance towards human subject research ethics questions even more important. Netnography tends to be less costly and timelier than many other methods because it leverages online archives and existing technologies to rapidly and efficiently gather and sort relevant data. However, netnographers must also cope with the vagaries and mixed blessings of data abundance. Sorting, classifying, and making sense of vast amounts of information can prove challenging and must be dealt with in a rigorous manner. These are some of the key benefits and drawbacks of the method. The following sections will provide the reader with a general understanding of the method. First, they outline some of its key philosophical foundations, including the key differences between digital and embodied ethnographic approaches. Then, they overview netnography's key research practices. The next two sections focus on matters of special concern to netnographers: data collection and analysis, and research ethics. The final section points the way forward for netnography, as it charts the possible development of this method into the future.

FOUNDATIONS OF NETNOGRAPHY

Netnography imparts a range of perspectives to the study of Internet-based social interactions and experiences. These perspectives include those of ethnographic research practices, research ethics, as well as research ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Netnography takes the range of traditional ethnographic practices – such as *entrée*, keeping field-notes, conducting interviews, undertaking

interpretation, and ensuring consent and a fair cultural representation – and adapts them to new, Internet-mediated contingencies. To accommodate the differences between social contexts, new practices have been added. These include procedures for locating online fieldsites to pursue particular research questions and topics of interest, dealing with large digital datasets, navigating challenging online ethical areas, and dealing with the public intellectual aspects of netnographic participation. In an age of colonized digital media, researcher immersion becomes linked not only to participation in social media but also to personal academic branding. The scholar becomes a personal brand who competes for a certain type of online attention and must build legitimacy and trust through the construction of a precise and distinctive academic image (see Kozinets, 2015).

Netnography's core purpose lies in valuing a cultural approach to understanding the social interaction that transpires through interactive media. For the purpose of netnography, a cultural insight involves an understanding of cultural elements such as language use, rituals, roles, identities, values, stories, myths, and, centrally, meanings. For example, netnography is fascinated by commonalities in symbol use. Recently, more attention is being given to the use of visual images in social media, such as emojis and memes (Riera, 2015). Similarly, the value of shared stories and narratives in social media interactions cannot be overstated in netnographic research (see, for example, Muñiz and Schau, 2005). Netnography's epistemology values a human-level interpretation, a recognition of the humanity operating behind the technology, an understanding of the urge to be social (and anti-social) that drives online communication and interaction. When a netnographer is absorbed into a communication or set of communications, she can then relay the way that sense is made in this context, the manner in which meaning is conveyed, and the practices perpetrated and perpetuated in the digital world and beyond.

Online and embodied social interactions are often intermingled in practice. They are increasingly intermixed in contemporary realignments of technology and social being such as mobile phones, wearable technologies, and regimes of surveillance capitalism (Zuboff, 2015) and sousveillance (Mann et al., 2003). Yet there are still enough fundamental differences between life on and off screen to necessitate lucid adaptations of traditional ethnographic practices into those of netnography. As detailed and explained in *Netnography: Redefined* (Kozinets, 2015, pp. 72–5), there are six fundamental differences between online and face-to-face sociality that are salient to the practice of netnography and ethnography:

- 1 **Alteration.** Communication changes to suit the technological medium, whether it is a Twitter post's restrictive 280-character limit, YouTube's coded video language, the increasing use of emojis and memes, or the deliberative act of turning thoughts and utterances into visual text of one sort or another. Netnographers must become adept translators of an ever-evolving set of meanings and symbols.
- 2 **Access.** Technology provides radically different experiences of social access. Existing friends can communicate more intensely. Close family members who are not as technologically literate may be locked out of key communication channels. New relationships can happen with the press of an icon in Tinder. Strangers become friends; friends become strangers; relationships gain a new fluidity. Online interactions can gain prominence over physical ones. As well, people with particular needs or interests can find each other much more easily, regardless of physical or geographic barriers. Netnography transpires within this new spectrum of social connection and relation.
- 3 **Archiving.** All online social communications are automatically stored and archived in various ways and places. In-person interactions generally leave only wispy memories, evaporating as they occur. However, online social interactions do not. Online social interactions are automatically archived, easily shared, and create permanent records for netnography. Yet privacy concerns such as the 'right to be forgotten' (Rosen, 2012)
- also become increasingly salient matters for netnographers to consider.
- 4 **Analysis.** Because of technological developments, researchers have more ways to search for, code, and analyze digital social interaction information than ever before. Scraping, mining, capturing, and using ever-more-sophisticated software programs to automatically categorize and analyze the mass of textual, visual, audio, and audiovisual social content become highly relevant. Various new technologies provide multitudinous ways to analyze and visualize data. Netnographers face massive challenges as well as opportunities within this brave new world of analytic empowerment.
- 5 **Ethics.** These changes, and in particular the easy access to people's postings and personal information, raise a range of novel ethical, legal, and social questions relating to research in these online territories. When are social media conversations public and when are they private? Who owns this information? How is it to be used? As our legal and moral systems struggle to adapt to rapidly changing technologies and their impact on individuals, culture, and society, netnographers are among them.
- 6 **Colonization.** The final difference concerns the role of large corporate and organizational interests in online social spaces. Although one does not have to sit through advertising, surrender one's personal conversations over to a corporation, or implicitly agree to be spied upon by myriad government agencies to have an in-person conversation with family or friends, many actual and implicit terms of service do require such concessions. Companies and governments have intensely colonized technologically mediated interactions. This has important and unprecedented implications not only for the conduct of netnography, but also for the very nature of human social interaction and society.

NETNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH PRACTICES

Ethnography as an anthropological practice generally references in-person fieldwork that has been conducted by gaining membership into particular social groups and observing

and participating within them. Although in the past it was customary for a netnography to focus in on a particular site or location, this is no longer necessary (e.g. Kozinets, 2002a). Any topic, even a topic that does not exist discretely in the physical world – such as crowdfunding or fashion blogging – can be considered for netnographic investigation.

In netnography, the concept of field site liquefies. No longer is a particular location needed for a netnographic fieldsite. Particular topics can constitute sites. Individual people, or groups of individual names, can constitute sites as they move through multiple communication channels. The allegedly bounded physical fieldsite is no more, but some of the practices used to engage within it remain surprisingly salient. A particular online community can be the focus of a given netnography, such as a corporate LinkedIn group dedicated to workplace rumours and complaints. Or the topic could be more widely dispersed among different locations, such as using social media to cope with the challenges of being a new manager or female entrepreneur.

Topics can manifest through a range of sites accessed from multiple locations and through many different devices. In the most vital stage of netnography – search – researchers must invest the time to match their research questions and interests to appropriate online ‘locations’. The evolving set of research practices that netnography encompasses are centered upon the use of various types of search engines to locate particular sorts of interactional and social information, as well as the use of different types of communication channels to conduct research-related interactions with persons of interest. Search engines used in netnography can range from web applications that are widely available – Google is likely the most popular and familiar – to those which are highly customized and specialized, and may be programmed on request. In addition, websites are often deployed in order to create a controlled interactional space. These websites can be placed on the general Internet, may take the form of blogs,

or be centered in social networking sites such as Facebook. The goals of this information search and communication are to answer focused netnographic research questions about particular topics, sites, or people.

It is incumbent upon netnographers to examine the wide range of social media formats, including social networking sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook, microblogs such as Twitter, video sites such as YouTube and Vimeo, visual sites such as Instagram and Snapchat, blogs, the old standby of forums, apps such as Tinder and WhatsApp, and other communicative sites. This crucial stage of netnography requires the discovery of online social spaces to help refine specific research questions and to locate the type of social interactional information that will inform these questions and assist in answering them.

To choose netnographic sites as part of a formal study, researchers should look for particular loci of interaction or experience that: (1) are more rather than less directly relevant to the study’s research question, orientation, or its topic; (2) have a larger amount of seemingly relevant data, be it textual, visual, audiovisual, audio, graphical, or otherwise; (3) offer a larger rather than smaller number of discrete message posters; (4) provide the researcher with a sense of activity and liveliness, as a social place where something interesting is happening; (5) exhibit postings and other data that is time-stamped more recently (if currency is relevant; in historical investigations it may not be); (6) provide the researcher with interactions that are more detailed or descriptively rich; (7) offer a more welcoming atmosphere and one in which interpersonal contact might be pursued; and (8) exhibit interactions where one poster responds to another, and another responds to them, creating conversational threads that manifest a flow of conversation.

As with many qualitative techniques, netnographies are usefully subject to rules of saturation, such that the collection of netnographic data should stop once new insights on important topical areas related to the

research focus or question seem no longer to be generated by the engagement. Some netnographers will closely track the amount of text collected, sampled, analyzed, and read, reporting it quantitatively, as well as accounting for the number of distinct participants. This sort of accounting can satisfy some who wish to more objectively understand the composition or extent of the dataset.

The necessity for researcher participation in netnography has been a matter of some debate. As with an ethnographer, the goal of the netnographer is a deep understanding that reflects the lived experience and social world that is to be represented in the netnography. However, given the fluidity of notions such as culture, community, and membership within these categories in the online social context (see Kozinets, 2015, pp. 9–13), there is certainly some debate about what constitutes participation. In netnography, as in a physical ethnography, researchers must negotiate a spectrum of participation and observation. Yet netnography is also based upon an experience of embedded cultural understanding. Participation may not involve actively posting messages in this or that particular online group, but it does suggest an understanding that is built up over time from various interactions, be they with archived texts, informational web-pages, people met through interviews, or many other means. Without experience of the cultural context surrounding a particular site, topic, or person, the netnographic interpretation suffers, becoming more descriptive than explanatory. Immersion and engagement assure the reader that the netnography is based on a human understanding of meaning, of the relevant codes and languages represented, whether they belong to one group, to a set of groups, or to a multitude. The key to this understanding is cultural relation, representation, and translation based upon careful cultural curation of online and other relevant materials. This stance differentiates netnography from data mining.

In data mining, the qualitative data on the Internet is considered as a type of content

that must be decontextualized in order to reveal more general patterns. In netnography, researchers view qualitative online data from the perspective of cultural understanding and thus elevate context to the point of it being a source of many complex central constructs. Data mining tends to be a software-driven, heuristic exercise in word recognition and content coding that can have considerable value in answering particular sorts of questions. In fact, for handling large netnographic datasets, some kind of content analysis – whether automated or manual – is invaluable and nearly unavoidable. However, procedures must be careful to minimize the risk of missing some of the most interesting contextualized cultural components of online social phenomena. Netnography seeks cultural engagement on a human level, and its meaningful presence in the final research representation, by carefully tracking and pursuing these contextual connections.

Tom Phillips (2011) provides a useful example of an insightful netnographic study that transcends the limitation of mere data mining and content analysis. Phillips sought to investigate online fan communities. He began his research by participating in online fan communities devoted to the work of filmmaker Kevin Smith, whose activities cut across a number of social media channels. Initially interested in notions of social capital as they were expressed online, Phillips found his online interactions with fans deepening his experience of both fandom and online sociality in new and unexpected ways. As he began to meet other fans in person and extend his online connections into personal meetings and friendships, he was able to explore the complexity of contemporary fan relationships as phenomena that often express a distinctly human element of the hunger for personal contact. Reversing his earlier assumptions about online fan's social capital building from their cultural capital, he finds the most important elements to be social and connective, rather than knowledge-based. Data mining of extant discourses relating to

fandom would have revealed only the starting point of Phillips' research: the presence of many fan discussions apparently dominated by the knowledge structures of specialized cultural capital. It took netnography, with its participative stance and human sensibilities, to reveal the deeper strata of human connection and personal friendship networks that undergird these phenomenon-level cultural and communal formations.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS IN NETNOGRAPHY

Like ethnographers, those who would perform netnographic research must constantly tack back and forth between two core experiential frames. First is the experience-close, 'emic', 'subjective' immersion in social media interactions and experiences. Second is the more 'etic', distanced, 'objective', abstract, and 'scientific' mode that objectifies, speaks in scientific tongues, and seeks to answer research questions. Data will inform the netnographer's understanding of the emic, the etic, and the translation between the two realms of understanding.

Data in netnography assumes three main forms: archival data, co-created data, and fieldnote data. Archival data in netnography can act as a historical record and a cultural baseline. It is comprised of any pre-existing data the researcher gathers that does not involve her involvement in co-creating or eliciting the data. The capture, saving, and storage of these pre-existing archives of data is very important. A variety of means and tools are available to help the netnographer capture, save, and organize archival data. Co-created data is interactional, the result of elicitation, interview, conversation, or other social interchange between the netnographic researcher and relevant persons or other actors in the social media scene (these could be textual, or even non-human actors like bots). Co-created data could result

from researcher participation in a Twitter discussion, or taking part in or initiating a conversation on a LinkedIn group. Scaraboto (2015), for example, uses a geocaching research web-page to elicit participation in netnographic discussions about geocaching and thus to co-create data. Fieldnote data is authored by the netnographer and constitutes firsthand observations about her participation in the netnography, her reflections on interactions and experiences. Keeping fieldnotes is recommended in netnography, and the reflection and human interaction that underpins it is considered to be a key sign of participation.

There are two basic ways to capture online data: saving and capturing. Saving involves storing a particular set of information as a computer-readable file which does not necessarily preserve its formatting. Capturing involves taking a snapshot-like visual image of information that appears on the computer screen, which may not be machine-readable but which preserves formatting. In data mining and content analysis contexts, files are often saved. In netnography, however, there are choices to be made. Capturing images is appropriate when context, visual elements, and perhaps other types of links, for example, video, may prove salient to answering the research question. In netnography, the default decision is generally to capture the image rather than to reduce it and lose context by saving the file. Various software programs that can capture the entire flow of images across the screen have been found useful in netnography. What are required are methods of data capture that can accommodate the naturalistic richness of people's multifaceted and multidimensional online representations.

Although there is now a range of content analysis approaches including the use of machine intelligence called 'natural language processing', even the best computer programs currently miss many more meanings than they are able to recognize. Machines are excellent at particular kinds of understanding, but understanding cultural behavior still requires human beings because human

associative nets are complex and incredibly vast. Netnography seeks to maintain the importance of human intelligence as the most reliable method for the translation and interpretation of social and cultural meanings, but to balance this against the enormous demands that come from finding and analyzing gigantic cultural datasets.

Netnography involves an expansive look at online information, then a focus onto its particulars, with a very fine-grained examination of some of those elements. To be useful during such a process, data capture must be flexible and reliable. For example, Brown et al. (2003) began by sampling a variety of different sites devoted to particular retro brand communities, but eventually narrowed their search down to particular threads of subsections of these communities that were theoretically informative. Netnographers often use automated data capture techniques. Many times these techniques are employed in coordination with some sort of qualitative data analysis software program for the large initial scans of online source material. Automated data capture and analysis can assist with data coding and organization in larger projects with greater amounts of data. When the topic of study is a large, active social media site, for instance, or when the work seeks to explore a major topic, the netnographer will often rely on automated methods to search, capture, scan, and then narrow down the large resulting amount of data. Usually this is the beginning stage of a netnography.

The next stage of the netnography will involve a more intensive focus on much smaller amounts of data. For this, capturing context is important. Manual data collection and analysis in netnography infer the capture of computer files on a hard drive or other memory device. Then, these files tend to be coded manually, on hardcopy printouts, or in document programs, such as Word, spreadsheets, or database programs. At this point in the netnography, these more labor-intensive methods of capture and analysis make sense because the data is selectively and

scientifically reduced to a smaller and much more manageable size, perhaps around 500 printed pages.

Just as it does in ethnography, data collection in netnography occurs simultaneously with some basic data analysis. Although the act of participating changes the nature of data collection and analysis, this act is what distinguishes netnography and makes human understanding of cultural contexts possible. Netnography uses content analysis in an interpretive manner, reflecting social interactions back to self, and self back into social interactions and experiences. In the final analysis of cultural content, the goal is cultural fluency: thus, a netnographer should be conversant with expert others about a topic, fluent in the symbolic languages of a site, or so knowledgeable about a key person that they have an almost biographical authority regarding them.

However, netnography is not necessarily founded on a repetitive and difficult manual process of interpretation. Instead, netnography as a set of practices holds human intelligence and understanding to be at the center of its repertoire of interpretive and analytic processes. Software solutions are often used to expedite data search, data narrowing, project organization, data storage, data coding, data display, and theory building. Indeed, netnographies could not exist without the content analysis software of search engines. The epistemological difference between netnography and processes which are more automated in terms of how data is treated and analyzed, however, is that in netnography, the determination of key research direction and data collection aspects of a research project unfold through time and with human reflection on the emergence of cultural understanding.

The act of analyzing cultural digital information is holistic: the social must be discerned within the data and linked to the various contexts in its network. The contexts to which it should be linked will include things such as sites, topics, message posters, archives, group

history, or conversations. Contextualizing online data is necessary to its analysis in netnography, and can prove challenging because digital social information comes to us altered and decontextualized (see Kozinets, 2006). The online landscape mediates social representation by making it more intentional and crafted. It can also render problematic the issue of informant identity. To deal with these issues, netnography assumes a symbolic interactionist and pragmatic stance that treats the social act as an important unit of analysis. The digital utterance, not the allegedly 'real' identity of an individual person, is what is of central interest.

People in contemporary society are constantly inventing and reinventing themselves through acts of display and mirroring. The online environment accelerates this tendency. As people display different aspects of themselves in different social contexts, such as multiple gender positions, they reveal more of their complex multidimensional inner truth, not less of it. The transformation of identity in different contexts is a natural consequence of our social life *in every context*. It is not simply an idiosyncratic tendency that manifests itself exclusively in the online environment. Netnography has long held that expression online may reveal at least as much as it obscures. In the right analytic hands, netnography can reveal the rich and multidimensional inner realities of social interaction in some cases in a far richer way than almost any other method.

Thus it would be fair to say that aspects of individuals that they might be unable or unwilling to express in physical interactions can become more apparent and accessible in their ostensibly anonymous, or pseudonymous, online expressions. As noted above, this makes netnography an ideal place to study topics that are sensitive or controversial. Excellent netnographies have been written about topics such as drug abuse, teen alcohol use, illegal websites, sexual fantasies, and other ostensibly hidden matters (see, for example, Orsolini et al., 2015).

RESEARCH ETHICS IN NETNOGRAPHY

The latest thinking in netnography considers online interactions to be similar to territories, and research to often be like an invasion or incursion of others' important communicative and interactional spaces. In this way, a netnography has some aspects in common with a physical or traditional ethnography. However, in other ways salient to the question of research ethics, there are stark contrasts when comparing netnographies to embodied ethnographies. For one, the presence of the researcher in netnography may not even be obvious – people being studied in a netnography may not even realize that they are being studied. In fact, unless they read academic journals and recognize their own postings, they may never realize that their freely shared conversations have become incorporated into business or management research. All of these thin boundaries between private and public spaces, rightful and illegitimate use, and sharing of social media data render ethics in netnography a matter both difficult and complex.

In most traditional methods, researchers collect information directly from people who consent to its use in research. In netnography, this is not always the case. Many researchers choose to perform observational netnographies where their participation is limited or not visible. In addition, because of the colonization of social media space, corporations and other organizations may own the data and not want it used in research. In some cases, they may have research businesses of their own. There are other possibilities as well. For example, the netnographer may be an active participant on a particular site that is of research interest. In this case, the researcher should honestly and completely disclose her presence, affiliations, and intentions. In other cases, where participation does not take the form of active posting in an online group, but involves the collection of interactional data, there may be no need for a potentially disruptive disclosure. For example, Smith

and Stewart (2012) observed a bodybuilding forum online for 36 months without making personal contact. In terms of using data, there are a number of guidelines governing its use in research publications and reports. Particular source materials, such as blogs, should usually be cited. Depending upon the likely amount of risk or harm to research participants, various degrees of cloaking, or even the rewriting of data (so it can not be traced through entry into a search engine) are recommended.

THE EVOLUTION OF NETNOGRAPHY

In the business and management field there can be a tension between the academic tendency to critique business, to cast a critical eye upon markets, organizations, and other institutional business structures, and a more pragmatic imperative. Indeed, management research tends to take place within the rubric of business schools and their training programs. Corporations and governments tend to expect business research to be applied or 'relevant' (Augier & March, 2007). It should help businesses do what businesses do best. This includes making profits, becoming more efficient, expanding globalization, and gaining legitimacy. The two elements, the critical and the pragmatic, coexist in some contemporary business and management scholarship but are always somewhat at odds.

When we add an interdisciplinary orientation into the mix, matters can become even more complicated. And when that orientation draws from anthropology, with all of its divergent discourses and disapproving subdisciplines, the orientation can become more difficult still. For anthropologists as scientists and anthropology as a field have observed and continue to observe firsthand the negative consequences of rampant colonialist capitalism. In countries around the world, anthropologists study and write about the dirty and hidden little secrets of

the contemporary capitalist system and its agents, the many tragic side effects, impoverished groups and peoples, devastated environments, extinct species, and decimated ways of life behind the first world business successes that business schools are expected to trumpet so loudly.

Because netnography aligns itself with anthropology, it cannot simply turn a blind eye. Indeed, the axiological orientation of netnography emphasizes examining the corporate colonization of online social interactions and experiences. Rhazzali (2015), mentioned above, finds that even the religious conversion of new acolytes to Islam follows a market-based logic of advertising and promotions. Certainly on the Internet and on our mobile phones and other devices, there seems to be increasingly little social space for us to relate to one another outside the sometimes-oppressive logic of the market (see Kozinets, 2002b).

Born of the business school, but built of the raw matter of critical cultural anthropology, netnography is an uneasy combination of two antithetical perspectives. On the one hand, netnography offers business and management scholars a powerful way to understand various constituencies. In the field of marketing research, netnography has a 20-year track record revealing consumer tastes, habits, meaning systems, social structures, hidden needs, creative potentialities, and much more. It has been applied to help businesses solve a variety of questions, from website design and consumer engagement to new product development and brand perceptions. On the other hand, netnography seeks to critically confront, challenge, and build solutions to address the problem of contemporary society and technology that are so readily revealed through its analysis of social media, for example the ineffective corporate governance of the interlinking of physical relations and virtual social connection noted by netnographers such as Muñiz and Schau (2005), Phillips (2011), and Scaraboto (2015).

Along with its scientific objective of understanding culture and society through

its social media manifestations, netnography questions the power of companies, individuals, and groups in today's technology-dominated social world. It asks that we interrogate how the transformation of political, corporate, and personal influence have been affected, coerced, and empowered by technological devices, networks, and practices. It suggests that we look for a clear and lucid rendering of the space beyond technophilia and technophobia, eschewing technological determinism for a type of co-evolution between people and our inventions. This inbuilt axiological emphasis of netnography asks if research can lead to better decisions. It investigates the boundaries of activism and social movement mobilization in the service of the public good. It wonders if technologies such as the Internet, which were heavily promoted as utopian, might still with important adjustments become tools of liberation and empowerment, or whether we must see them as elements of an inevitably insidious technologically based capitalism that has no end other than the furtherance of corporations and their owners' aims.

How does netnography hope to help researchers in business and management answer these important questions? Through the delineation and pursuit of four distinct types of netnography, which are described in more detail and illustrated with numerous detailed examples in Kozinets (2015). We can think of these four types of netnography arranged along two axes, in the familiar 2×2 business quadrant. The X-axis concerns the axiological representation orientation of the netnography, whether it will support and assist the existing status quo of business and management or whether it will challenge it. The two ends of this axis are labeled the complementary and the critical. The Y-axis concerns the analytic field focus, which is the particular orientation of the netnographic study, whether it will look at the larger and more general system, or whether it will examine particular instantiations of that system. The familiar labels global and local

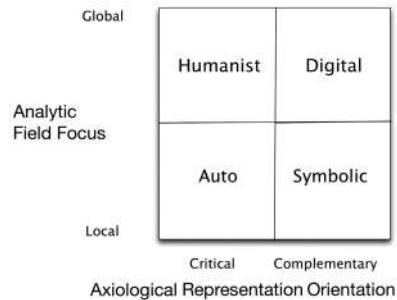


Figure 23.1 The four types of netnography

anchor this axis. As Figure 23.1 represents, the intersection of the two axes draws out four different netnographies, which will each be briefly explained in turn.

Positioned in the bottom left quadrant is Auto-netnography. 'Auto-netnography' is an adaptation of auto-ethnography (Hayano, 1979). It is form of netnography where data collection is filtered through the self and thus concerns a particularly 'local' site: one's own identity and story. Auto-netnographies, like auto-ethnographies have autobiographical elements and contain personal reflections on social media participation (for examples of this type of work, see Baym 2000; Kozinets & Kedzior 2009; Markham 1998). However, the Auto-netnography is not merely a personal recounting but a situated understanding with a distinctly critical edge. By passing analysis of social media interaction through the filter of self-reflection, a reflexive and powerful statement about existence in a contemporary time of technologically mediated communications can be constructed.

In the bottom right quadrant is the Symbolic Netnography. The Symbolic Netnography grew out of the need of netnography to provide insights that are useful to managers, particularly managers in marketing. Symbolic Netnographies, like commercial ethnography itself, attempt to help managers and others decode the everyday worlds of people or consumers. Symbolic Netnographies are also useful for theory building and understanding.

They are the most common type of netnography by far. Social media information and interaction are used to build a portrait of particular people or sites that can inform decision-making. The Symbolic Netnography tends to stay local, focusing on a specific group or field site and attempting to discern and explain their practices, meanings, and values, painting a portrait that can further a more purposeful, empathic, and culturally fluent understanding of them.

Digital Netnographies occupy the intersection of a complementary axiology and a global focus. Digital Netnographies are a more recent development that bridge statistically based data analytic techniques with cultural understandings. Automated and human-centered methods of cultural content analysis are used to discern general patterns oriented towards general or global fields of research inquiry. Usually these global fields concern the infrastructural workings and influences upon particular sociotechnical networks. After this inquiry, and often during it, a narrowed focus into particular aspects of findings will be explored with a keen eye towards their sociocultural implications. Like Symbolic Netnographies, they tend to be used mainly to help reinforce or improve existing business, management, and social practices.

Using critical inquiry and critical theory, Humanist Netnographies use social media data to investigate questions of social importance and have an impact upon their discussion and solution. Among the more pressing questions with which Humanist Netnographies might grapple is the changing nature of human social existence in the face of widespread technological change. To answer this question requires a systemic view of social media. It becomes necessary to follow local patterns to their wider networks, to the places they connect with global support structures in institutional, ideological, regulative, and market-based systems. Some possible questions follow: How does the nature of our social being change when our communications change? How do smart phones and

other technological agents change markets and politics? What should be done about all of this? Not only do Humanist Netnographies attempt to provide answers, they also encourage authors to help spread their findings. Humanist netnographies formalize the relationship of the netnographer to a social media audience, casting the researcher in the role of advocate and even activist.

Therefore, what began with the tension between anthropology and business and management studies results in four different types of netnography and two fundamental axiological orientations. One is pragmatic and easily applied to the needs of business and managers, in essence separating out research method from the resulting uses of the research to reinforce the current market system, as is so often the case in contemporary science. The other assumes a moral stance, building on the traditional placement of the academy in a gift economy that stands at a critical distance from other institutions such as government or business. As a critical form of research, netnography deploys understandings of wider technological, institutional, and ideological systems to chart possible paths for positive change and the pursuit of social betterment.

Netnography partakes in both of these streams, although thus far in its development it has been used mainly to prop up 'business as usual', particular in marketing. Yet netnography as recently redefined clarifies its anthropological basis and rediscovers its roots. As it does so, spreading to disciplines such as education, geography, tourism, technology studies, cultural studies, addiction research, sexuality, psychology, education, library sciences, sociology, theology, political science, and anthropology, it grows to both include and expand the research view of the topics and methods of management and business studies (see Bengry-Howell et al., 2011; Kozinets, 2012; Wiles et al., 2013). With technology changing so much of the world of business and management, there will be many opportunities for

researchers to provide rich, contextualized, pragmatic, and critical understandings by using netnography.

FURTHER READING

Kozinets, R. V. (2006), 'Click to Connect: Netnography and Tribal Advertising', *Journal of Advertising Research*, 46 (September), 279–88.

REFERENCES

- Augier, M. and March, J. (2007), 'The Pursuit of Relevance in Management Education', *California Management Review*, 49 (Spring), 129–46.
- Bakken, S. A. (2015), 'Silk Road 2.0: A Study of Cryptomarkets in a Deleuze-Guattarian Perspective'. Unpublished Master's Thesis. University of Oslo Department of Criminology and Sociology of Law, Faculty of Law, Norway.
- Baym, N. (2000), *Tune In, Log On: Soaps, Fandom, and Online Community*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bengry-Howell, A., Wiles, R., Nind, M. and Crow, G. (2011), 'A Review of the Academic Impact of Three Methodological Innovations: Netnography, Child-Led Research and Creative Research Methods', NCRM Hub, University of Southampton research paper.
- Brem, A. and Bilgram, V. (2015), 'The Search for Innovative Partners in Co-creation: Identifying Lead Users in Social Media through Netnography and Crowdsourcing', *Journal of Engineering and Technology Management*, 37(3): 40–51.
- Brown, S., Kozinets, R. V., and Sherry, J. F., Jr. (2003), 'Teaching Old Brands New Tricks: Retro Branding and the Revival of Brand Meaning', *Journal of Marketing*, 67 (July) 19–33.
- Hartmann, B. J. (2015), 'Peeking Behind the Mask of the Prosumer: Theorizing the Organization of Consumptive and Productive Practice Moments', *Marketing Theory* 16(1): 3–20.
- Hayano, D. (1979), 'Auto-ethnography: Paradigms, Problems, and Prospects', *Human Organization*, 38 (Spring): 99–104.
- Hine, C. (2000), *Virtual Ethnography*. London/Thousand Oaks, CA/New Delhi: Sage.
- Kozinets, R. V. (1997) "'I Want to Believe": A Netnography of *The X-Files* Subculture of Consumption', *Advances in Consumer Research*, Volume 24, ed., M. Brucks and D. J. MacInnis. Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, 470–5.
- Kozinets, R. V. (2002a), 'The Field Behind the Screen: Using Netnography for Marketing Research in Online Communities', *Journal of Marketing Research*, 39 (February): 61–72.
- Kozinets, R. V. (2002b), 'Can Consumers Escape the Market? Emancipatory Illuminations from Burning Man', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29 (June): 20–38.
- Kozinets, R. V. (2012), 'Marketing Netnography: Prom/ot(ulgat)ing a New Research Method', *Methodological Innovations Online* (MIO), 7(1): 37–45, see journal online at www.pbs.plym.ac.uk/mi/index.html.
- Kozinets, R. V. (2015), *Netnography: Redefined*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kozinets, R. V. and Kedzior, R. (2009), 'I, Avatar: Auto-netnographic Research in Virtual Worlds', in N. T. Wood and M. R. Solomon (eds), *Virtual Social Identity and Consumer Behavior*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, pp. 3–19.
- Mann, S., Nolan, J. and Wellman, B. (2003), 'Sousveillance: Inventing and Using Wearable Computing Devices for Data Collection in Surveillance Environments', *Surveillance & Society*, 1(3): 331–55.
- Markham, A. N. (1998), *Life Online: Researching Real Experience in Virtual Space*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Muñiz Jr., A. M. and Schau, H. J. (2005), 'Religiosity in the Abandoned Apple Newton Brand Community', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31(4): 737–47.
- Orsolini, L., Papanti, G. D., Francesconi, G. and Schifano, F. (2015) 'Mind Navigators or Chemicals' Experimenters? A Web Based Description of E-Psychonauts', *Cyberpsychology, Behaviour and Social Networking*, 18(5): 296–300.
- Phillips, T. (2011), 'When Film Fans become Fan Family: Kevin Smith Fandom and Communal Experience', *Participations: Journal of Audience & Reception Studies*, 8 (November): 478–96.

- Rhazzali, K. (2015), 'Islam Online: A Netnography of Conversion', in D. Enstedt, G. Larsson and E. Pace, Eds., *Annual Review of the Sociology of Religion: Religion and Internet*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 164–82.
- Riera, T. (2015) 'Online Feminisms: Feminist Community Building and Activism in a Digital Age', *Scripps Senior Theses*. Paper 653. Available at http://scholarship.claremont.edu/scripps_theses/653.
- Rosen, J. (2012), 'The Right to Be Forgotten', *Stanford Law Review Online*, 64, February 13. Accessed 2 April 2016, www.stanford-lawreview.org/online/privacy-paradox/right-to-be-forgotten/.
- Scaraboto, D. (2015), 'Selling, Sharing, and Everything in Between: The Hybrid Economies of Collaborative Networks', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 42 (June): 152–76.
- Smith, A. C. T. and Stewart, R. (2012), 'Body Perceptions and Health Behaviors in an Online Bodybuilding Community', *Qualitative Health Research*, 22(7): 971–85.
- Wu, S. (2014), Exploring the Data Work Organization of the Gene Ontology. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Florida State University College of Communication and Information, Tallahassee, Florida, USA.
- Wiles, R., Bengry-Howell, A., Crow, G. and Nind, M. (2013) 'But is it Innovation? The Development of Novel Methodological Approaches in Qualitative Research', National Centre for Research Methods University of Southampton Working Paper.
- Zuboff, S. (2015), 'Big Other: Surveillance Capitalism and the Prospects of an Information Civilization', *Journal of Information Technology*, 30: 75–89.

Ethnomusicology

Nic Beech and Stephen Broad

INTRODUCTION

Music is a central part of a culture both in general and as it relates to work. There are many cultures in which people have sung in order to help them with alienating work, to establish connections or simply to have some fun while working. At the same time, music and associated styles and fashions are used as ways of claiming and expressing identities and establishing group boundaries. In some cases, music is used to give a rhythm to repetitive work or to attract customers. In its many uses and expressions, music is part of the fabric of life at work and in addition to understanding other cultural specifics such as dress, linguistic patterns and ritualistic forms of behaviour, understanding the role that music plays in work cultures has the potential to develop insights about work cultures which would not otherwise be recognized, or at least not understood in the same way. Sound has meaning in cultures. It can variously signal alarm or joy, be an identifying emblem for a

culture or community (for example, a national anthem or 'our song'), and often things that are most important are expressed through musical sound in rituals and ceremonies (for example, at weddings or at significant sports events) as well as in everyday life. Ethnomusicology, as it applies to studies of work and organization, seeks to understand how music is produced, used and consumed in the symbolic practices of a culture. There is an interest in the music industry, but beyond that there is a focus on the part that music plays in everyday cultures of work.

In this chapter we will introduce the main methodologies of ethnographic fieldwork, participatory and practice-based approaches and autoethnography. We will outline some illustrative examples from areas as diverse as traditional factory work and contemporary community music and will conclude with some of the key questions and insights that ethnomusicology can offer to business, organizational and management research.

DEFINITIONS

Ethnomusicology has a rich and varied history which includes prolonged debate over how to define it. In a synthesis of the variety of approaches, Nettl (2005) identifies four definitive features. Ethnomusicology is the study of music in culture and resists any attempt to abstract music from the social setting in which it is created, performed and heard. For Nettl, it is a form of relativistic study, seeking to understand a music as its society understands it. Ethnomusicology studies all musical manifestations including the excellent, the ordinary and the 'barely acceptable' (2005, p. 13). The principal mode of research is fieldwork, direct observation and engagement with people who conceive, produce and consume music. Increasingly, there has been a focus on bi-musicality in which the researcher learns about the culture by participating in the music of the culture, typically by learning to play an instrument and taking part in music which is central to the culture. Following the initial bi-musicality approach, it is now more common to adopt an inter-musicality stance. This differs in not assuming that the researcher will start with a primary training in the norm of western music and add on a subsidiary knowledge of another culture, but rather will start from a more equal perspective in which neither tradition is presumed to have primacy over the other. Hence, ethnomusicology differs from other areas of music research by seeking a holistic and cultural understanding, having a concern with the meaning of sound and music for communities, and it differs from organizational ethnography in having a particular focus on what is heard, the meaning of sound and how such meanings are put to use in the culture.

An initial question is: what counts as 'music'? The enquiry into how it is defined (or disputed) within societies is part of ethnomusicology. Hargreaves et al. (2005) adopt an inclusive definition in which music is understood principally as sound (although it

incorporates silence and written forms), produced with intention as a mode of expression. In some settings, tonal or harmonic structures are emphasized, sometimes there is an expectation of some degree of sophistication and skill on the part of performers, but generally the meaning and purposes surrounding music are seen to differentiate it from mere noise or sound. For Hargreaves et al. (2005) music is inherently ambiguous and has what they refer to as a 'floating intentionality'. Quoting Cross (2005), they say: 'it [music] can be thought of as gathering meaning from the contexts within which it happens and in turn contributing meaning to those contexts' (p. 2), and hence music can take on meaningful significance for individuals, couples, groups, nations and signal messages that are interpersonal, commercial and ceremonial. In some settings music can enable, or be used as a proxy for, communication that would not otherwise happen, for example, the expression of emotion, joy, mourning, altered consciousness, social solidarity and isolation. Ethnomusicology is concerned with the connections between music, its meanings and significances, reflecting and contributing to the construction of a culture or community. Thus there is an aim to understand music and its associated practices in their social context.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

Higgins (2012) suggests three strategies of research which can provide a framework for an enquiry. These are: historical (re)construction, action exemplars and interrogation through a theoretical framework. Historical reconstruction draws upon published texts and academic analysis, but in addition, Higgins advises referring to popular magazines, websites and other less formal sources: a more pluralistic sense of 'primary sources' than old-school musicology allows. These can provide some insight into how historical moves have entered the popular imagination

and may have influenced the thinking of practitioners. Trends and fashions in music are significant in the influence they have in commercial markets (Frith et al., 2009), the interests of young and aspiring musicians, and in how sub-cultures develop forms of expression including music, language, dance, food and dress (Hargreaves et al., 2005). Such trends, however, may or may not produce musical outcomes which are genuinely innovative in a technical sense as, for example, well-worn patterns of song structure, musical texture and melody are reproduced in popular songs across apparently diverse sub-cultures. Analysed purely musicologically, such music might only be interesting from the perspective of how patterns are reproduced, perhaps with different musical textures. From an ethnomusicological perspective, it is the relationship between the music and social context which is particularly important and, for example, the production or adoption of relatively similar forms of music in different social settings is itself a matter of interest. Hence, a historical perspective is important for incorporating an understanding of the relationship between the socio-economic backdrop, shifts in markets, changes in clothing, literature and other aspects of the cultural economy (Pratt & Jeffcutt, 2009) which enable certain forms of musical expression to emerge and constrain the success of other musical modes of being.

An alternative strategy is the use of 'action exemplars' which are accounts of practice which aid the process of theoretical construction (Higgins, 2012). Higgins advocates for the use of exemplars rather than seeking to produce a holistic explanation of a culture because of the danger of 'drowning' in data. This approach is contestable, and approaches which draw on Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), for example, would celebrate an open form of data gathering followed by iterative cycles of selection of data to form categories which then form the basis for engagement with theory. Whether working in a tradition that does some initial selection

of what it is important to pay attention to (as Higgins does) or in an approach which overtly selects where to pay attention after initial engagement with the empirical site of enquiry (as Grounded Theory does), methods which tend to be most frequently used are ethnographic fieldwork and autoethnography (Higgins, 2012). We will now explore these methods in a little more depth and discuss examples relating to the field of organization research.

ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELDWORK

Fieldwork entails the researcher becoming embedded in the culture, observing, often participating and learning from members of the culture. Bendrups (2006) highlights what he refers to as the 'myth of fieldwork' (2006, p. 24). (The myth is that ethnomusicologists arrive in societies to conduct objective research based on observation, recording and collation of musical performances.) Normally, an interpretivist stance to research is adopted which seeks to understand local meanings, how they relate to societal norms and mores, and produce accounts which explore diversity of interpretation. Thus, different groups might react quite differently to the same piece of music, for example, some seeing it as part of their community identity and as highly attractive while others see it as alienating. These reactions say something about the social differences within the culture. Understanding this can involve analysis of the music, but is a starting point, rather than a culmination of the work (as it might be in analytical musicology): fieldwork provides the route through which the researcher becomes immersed in the music and meaning of a culture.

Baily (2001) has argued that in order to understand music it is very helpful, if not necessary, to learn to play music and an instrument of that culture. Playing an instrument of the culture means that interaction with other

musicians occurs in a particularly engaged way – helping to gain insight into a shared psychological and embodied experience. The emphasis on learning is significant as going through the musical training process of a culture not only delivers technical ability but also insight into the norms and expectations of being in a teacher-learner relationship and the context of collaborative music-making. Training the ears and hands enhances theoretical understanding, sometimes in unpredictable ways. For example, Baily reviews the literature on African rhythms which sounded extremely complex to western ears, and yet could be understood by taking the role of participant since each individual contribution to the sound was relatively simple and the complexity lay in the combination of the whole. Baily develops the ideas of Hood (1960) on bi-musicality. Like being bilingual, insights into a culture can be gained from being able to communicate musically. However, unlike someone who is fully bilingual, it may not be necessary for ethnomusicologists to be able to play at concert level but to learn a second music as a beginner. In fact, there are potential advantages to learning as long as there is sufficient proficiency to be able to join in with music-making. Being a high level performer would give access to some parts of the culture, but, in Baily's view, discovering how the average performer learns, uses his or her skills and collaborates with others may be more revelatory about the culture in general. In his words, the job is to be an ethnomusicologist first and a player second, or third. The learning process reveals what is regarded as important and enables the ethnomusicologist to engage with other learners and group activities (rather than intensive solo study supported by one-to-one coaching from a master). Mistake-making is a crucial part of learning and being able to identify mistakes reveals the rules of operation and the systems of value that characterize the community in question. For example, the right notes might be played but at the wrong tempo for dancing, and this becomes clear when the dancers

complain. Similarly, this type of engagement with players and performing encompasses other aspects of insight which would be much more difficult to appreciate from a purely theoretical perspective. Examples would include how bodily movement in relation to the instrument is conducted. Differing stances, grips, positions and so on can impact not only on the sound that is produced but also show cultural differences. Compare, for example, the relatively static, seated classical orchestral violinist to the standing folk fiddle player whose movements express a different form of bodily engagement with the music. These stances have musical function, in the traditional folk player having a more 'relaxed' stance which is compatible with playing in lower positions on the finger board, while orchestral musicians hold the instrument erect and hence can more easily play in higher registers.

Gabor (2013) studied the embodied process of learning to be a classical musician, focusing on children and professionals. She emphasized socialization before and during learning as people see and hear what it is to perform, and come to regard the self as having a vocation for music. In addition to a social and psychological orientation, physical bodily changes are necessary. For example, string players need to develop calluses on their fingers where they press the strings down. Perhaps ironically, the calluses, which are less sensitive than normal skin, enable greater sensitivity in playing (for example by being able to sustain longer notes and play with vibrato) and there can be enhanced feeling around the calluses. The physical change of growing calluses can be observed to interact with psychological change as learners gain confidence and hence play with greater expression or vigour, and consequently continue to build their calluses and muscular control. Embodiment also relates to emotions of playing. For example, Gabor (2013) discusses a pianist who, not untypically, put herself into a particular, contemplative frame of mind in order to play a piece and this helped

with the subtle weighting of arms and wrists in generating expression. Some aspects of embodiment relate to preparation through restraint. For example, singers may choose not to drink milk or carbonated drinks prior to a performance because of the impact on the voice and the production of sound. Paying attention to the embodiment of learning, rehearsing and performing is significant in understanding what the ‘lived experience’ of being a musician is like, what pain, joy, physical development and restraint are involved in inhabiting the identity and practice.

Studies of musical communication have also drawn on psycho-social theories and emphasized the interplay between talk, communal sense-making and music-making. An example of this is ‘interthinking’: the interactive process through which people not only share knowledge but are able to be creative together, producing joint outputs (Littleton & Mercer, 2013). Although in some cultures creative achievements are often attributed to individuals, research indicates that creativity is commonly a collaborative enterprise and even where aspects of it are attributed to individuals (e.g. in composition), those individuals are normally part of a community in which thoughts and practices are shared, discussed and reviewed. Miell and Littleton’s (2008) study of bands in rehearsal show how interactions, both verbal and non-verbal, led to shared interpretations of the music, how parts fitted together in pieces and how pieces fitted together in performance. These interactions were not always harmonious and included evaluation and critique – often impassioned on points of difference, but there was a shared striving to achieve a good performance. Littleton and Mercer (2013) expand this understanding and identify three modes of communication between musicians: instruction, cooperation and collaboration. Each mode has verbal and non-verbal aspects. Hence, instruction can be in the form of telling or coaching or non-verbally learning by ear or sight. Cooperation can be based on overt discussion or non-verbally worked

out in rehearsal through eye contact, gestures and playing in such a way as to demonstrate a point (for example, about volume or tempo). Collaboration can be based on discussion and evaluation of performance or, for example in improvisation, non-verbally through the spontaneous creation of ‘musical utterances’ (2013, p. 44) which are picked up and elaborated by others.

These forms of interthinking, showing how groups form and operate and how creativity is achieved, can be studied through observation or participation. Following Littleton and Mercer (2013), we can note that perceived similarities and differences between researchers and participants can influence which is the most effective approach to observation. For example, where skill levels are compatible and the context is fairly informal, participant observation can be highly effective. However, where the context is more formal or pressured, for example in preparation for an imminent performance, participation could be less welcome. Last, where there are strong perceived differences between academic researchers and musicians (e.g. as Miell & Littleton (2008) experienced with a young indie band) observation can be most effective when the band members are given video cameras to self-record without the researchers being physically present. Littleton and Mercer (2013) observe interthinking arising through disputational interaction (where disagreements are surfaced), exploratory interaction (where questions are asked and proposals are tried out) and cumulative interaction (where there is little critique but musical ideas are added to by others). From an ethnomusicological perspective, such observations can produce insights into how musicians are able to develop a way of performing together, how their social rules and roles enable disputation, creation and accommodation of a group product, and how music itself is produced.

We will now explore two examples, one from a traditional work setting and another

from a setting which blends paid and voluntary work, professional and amateur musicians.

FACTORY WORK

Music can be put to a variety of uses as a cultural resource in the workplace. In industrial settings music can operate as a way of coping with alienation by workers, for example as a way of coping with boredom, but it can also be used by companies as a way of separating workers, for example by making conversation difficult or by highlighting social differences. For example, Jones and Schumacher (1992) explore how pop songs used in the workplace bring the personal into the 'impersonal' workspace. Romantic conventions and images and stories of love and loss relate to how people in the workspace identify themselves and others as being in 'conventional', 'successful' relationships, or not. Music can be used by companies as a way of increasing performance (DeNora, 2000), for example through applying the findings of experiments on types and tempos of music which are correlated with increased work activity. Equally, workers can use music as a form of resistance (Korczynski, 2007). Although the workers are positioned as an audience, they can be an active audience (Negus, 1996) by exercising choice in what songs are played or by appropriating the meanings of songs, for example, singing along with irony or changing words to emphasize otherness from management. Similarly, music can be used by workers as a community-building resource which helps them survive challenging and unpleasant circumstances.

Korczynski (2011) provides an example of an ethnomusicological study of a factory which manufactures window blinds. There were two main rooms in the factory: the 'rollers room' in which roller blinds were made and the 'verticals room' in which vertical blinds were made. The work was Taylorized

and accomplished through eleven job types. There was a workforce turnover in the region of 35–40 per cent and management had introduced some policies to seek to increase commitment, including a works' council. In the rollers room, music was played on worker-owned radios which were placed around the workspace and were controlled by the workers. In the verticals room, a centralized system played radio through loudspeakers. The workers had a choice in which radio station was played.

The majority of the workers created a 'stayin' alive culture' (2011, p. 93) in which they coped with boredom and feelings of alienation and being unimportant by creating a 'bright mood'. They talked of needing the radio just to get through the working day, as one worker put it: 'Oh, you need the radio. Oh it's deathly, it's deathly without it' (2011, p. 94). The degree of participation varied through the week, with the same song (an example being *Angels* by Robbie Williams, 1997) eliciting no reaction on a Monday but having a 'normal pattern' of singing the 'key bits' on a Friday. Workers also talked about songs that expressed how they felt about work, such as *I don't like Mondays* (Boomtown Rats, 1979), but the meanings associated with this were about the difficulty of getting back to work on a Monday rather than the actual narrative of the song with its story of nihilistic violence. Similarly, the words 'we don't need no thought control' from Pink Floyd's *Another Brick in the Wall* (1979) was sung with some passion by a worker who had just been 'called in' by the supervisor. Korczynski asked 89 workers if they had a song that spoke to them about their working lives, and 79 had swift and clear responses, almost all expressing ways of coping with negative experience (e.g. *I Will Survive*, Gloria Gaynor, 1978). On Korczynski's analysis, the workers are (amongst other things) using the music to stick together. There are patterns of interaction, times for singing along and times for silence, different individuals have their 'party pieces' which

everyone expects them to do and the ‘stayin’ alive’ culture is one of collective response to an alienating work experience. These forms of producing music in an informal way both rely upon and exhibit cultural knowledge. Knowing the melody, enough of the words or just a hook line is required before community members can join in and/or use the song to subvert a corporate message. For us to understand Korczynski’s analysis we need to know enough of the song and its place in the culture. However, this does not necessarily mean that an ‘accurate’ (or true to the composer’s intention) understanding is necessary. For example, the Police song *Every Breath You Take* (1983) is about an obsession with a ‘target’ person, a story of stalking, and yet it was used at many weddings as a romantic song (Gabriel et al., 2000) presumably because a superficial awareness of the lyrics makes it sound like a shared attraction. However, this ‘mistake’ is, from an ethnomusicological perspective, an interesting interpretation, perhaps indicating something about the cultural power of romantic narrative to lead to selective perception on the part of listeners rather than simply being an error.

COMMUNITY MUSIC

Community music provides a potentially fruitful field in which to explore the relationship between ethnomusicology and organizational and management research. It is an area in which change and development are central, it typically entails complex organizational practices as professionals, amateurs and learners collaborate to achieve particular outcomes, and it articulates with boundary-crossing in identity work. Higgins (2012) suggests three perspectives on community music: the ‘music of a community; communal music making and an active intervention between a music leader or facilitator and participants’ (2012, p. 3). The music of a community may symbolize a culture, for

example, traditional Celtic music may symbolize a particular view of communities in some parts of Ireland and Scotland, or a samba-reggae hybrid may symbolize particular Afro-Brazilian communities. Communal music-making emphasizes the activity, for example, in the form of ‘sessions’ or *ceilidhs*. The third perspective entails musicians in teaching and enabling others, for example, by teaching a particular instrument in group sessions, by enabling community members to play together or by using music to fulfil some broader purpose which could relate to, for example, health, well-being, youth development or criminal-justice. In each perspective, the focus is normally outside formal institutions and although education may be part of the purpose, the activities are not normally restricted to schools, universities or conservatoires. Community music can be a way that a community expresses identities and traditions at the same time as emphasizing the role of interaction in community building. Players and other participants may have a strong sense of place and the people for whom, and with whom, they perform. Value is often placed on involvement and participation and while facilitators may be highly qualified experts, many participants may practice at levels closer to a beginner or intermediate player. Community music is often associated with resistance to established institutionalized structures and promoting ‘folk’ or ‘working class’ vernaculars rather than ‘high art’ (Higgins, 2012), though there are also other models. Last, the community musician identity has been categorized as a ‘boundary-walker’ (Kushner et al., 2001). They operate between established (establishment) identities as performing musicians and music educators and other professions such as therapists, community workers, teachers and probation officers. Community musicians often work alongside these other professionals and, in music circles, may experience negative images of amateurism. On the other hand, as Higgins (2012) argues, the boundary-walking image

can be construed very positively, reflecting someone who goes beyond normal restrictions and transcends cultural limitations. Hence, their practice can incorporate activism, facilitating community change and personal development as well as musical outcomes. As Deane and Mullen (2013) argue, many who are taking part in the revivals of Gaelic music are expressing their views and feelings on social change and development. As Pete Moser of 'More Music' put it: 'Almost all the work I do has a dual purpose. Community music, for me, has always been a mixture of being a social worker and a composer and finding ways of bridging that ... I passionately believe that music has the ability to make communities pull together' (cited in Deane & Mullen, 2013, p. 29). Similarly, Lombos (1998) describes the blurred boundary between the music industry, commerciality and community music. He cites the example of Asian Dub Foundation, a commercially successful band which formed through a community music project. Referring to this work, Dean and Mullen quote the Asian Dub Foundation guitarist saying 'if you give opportunities to people who don't have a chance, you'll not only get an increase in self-esteem, but new music: new sounds, new combinations, that will guarantee music's longevity' (cited in Deane & Mullen, 2013, p. 30).

Many forms of community music relate to social positioning and often resistance to prevailing powers – be it traditional music as part of a resistance to colonizing powers or youth music of rebellion which is expressing distance from established societal hierarchies (Cloonan, 2015). Beyond merely being a form of expression, music plays an intertwined role with actual rebellion and resistance through, for example, songs of rebellion and 'marching' songs or by providing an alternative socio-economic setting for people to develop and produce music which gives meaning to their community and provides a source of income (Beech et al., 2015).

AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

Autoethnography entails the researcher researching and writing his or her own culture and practice (Kempster & Stewart, 2010). An advantage of traditional ethnography is that the researcher is from outside the culture and so may notice aspects of cultural forms and practices which are simply taken for granted by those within the culture. Conversely, for the autoethnographer, becoming sufficiently detached to be able to recognize the significance of 'normality' can be a challenge. Equally, a difficulty in traditional ethnography is for the researcher to be accepted, speak the language and undertake the cultural practices sufficiently well to have an 'insider experience', while for the autoethnographer these matters are more straightforward. In autoethnography, therefore, reflexivity is the foundational requirement. For Parry and Boyle (2009) this entails two forms of reflection: *outward*, in which the symbols and practices of the culture are observed and analysed; and *inward*, in which personal reactions, meanings and emotions are recognized and expressed.

This blend of the inwardly focused and the outwardly focused is explored by Humphreys et al. (2003) in their consideration of jazz. They are mainly concerned with small sized bands which emphasize soloing and improvisation. They argue that there is an analogy between ethnography and performing jazz. For Humphreys:

Playing jazz is not just a means of self-expression, but of self-discovery and self-development as well. This insight has, of course, to be balanced with an awareness that jazz is a social art that builds on collective memory learned through a process of socialization into a community of practice. (Humphreys et al., 2003, p. 7)

Autoethnographic approaches often entail playing with others, and for Humphreys et al. this can reveal to the musician/autoethnographer what kind of musical identity they have, how it relates to musical capabilities and limitations, and what possibilities it affords.

For Barrett (1998), who also draws upon autoethnographic work, the key to successful jazz performance is what he calls 'dynamic synchronization', which is the rapport between individual (often the soloist) and the group who develop a collective musical understanding. Because of the improvisational nature of much jazz, this means that not only is the soloist improvising, the rest of the band is also needed to extemporize in order to make the piece 'work'. Sometimes this can mean a repetitive accompaniment, but it can also entail considerable, if less prominent, composing-in-the-moment to provide suitable harmonic and textural support as the solo progresses and changes. Hence, there is often a great deal of tacit knowledge and understanding amongst the group such that they can react with great speed, but without knowing in advance exactly what notes will be played. Gaining membership of such a group entails not only musical skill but also the development of this group-based tacit knowledge that underpins the community of practice. Hence, autoethnography may be particularly suited to such studies.

Zack (2000) provides insight into how different communities of practice have structured improvisation. He regards this as a form of conversation, not only between the players on stage, but between successive generations of players. For example, Postbop can be regarded as a reaction to Bebop which itself was a reaction to swing. In swing improvisation practices involved embellishing and elaborating tunes over a structured chord or harmonic sequence. Hence, there were 'good' and 'bad' notes (Barrett, 1998) as some fitted with established harmonies and rhythmic patterns and others would break those conventions. Bebop made more use of chromatic 'passing notes' between the degrees of the scale or mode in use, and thereby created more complex tonal and rhythmic sequences. Later Bebop also introduced new chord alteration and additional spontaneity to the accompaniment. Postbop and Free Jazz seek to challenge how

improvisation itself is understood by, for example, abandoning the norm of melody and taking a few notes around which a band will create responses live. Hence, the notion of 'good' and 'bad' notes (amongst other musical matters) are increasingly questioned as the values of practitioners develop. For the jazz player, 'playing outside' is breaking the current rules, or playing outside the norm. Not delivering what is expected. For Zack (2000), these practices are revealing because they show not only what it means to produce music in a particular jazz genre but also what the social rules are which contextualize the performance. Decisions on when and where to modulate (that is, change from one key to another), and whether or not to do it in a conventional way, reveal much about the players' musical group norms and their musical identity.

Storytelling is another means by which players reveal inheritances from their culture and forebears. Humphreys et al. (2011) discuss how the stories that jazz musicians tell each other, often of iconic figures, has an impact on how they work together, what they expect of band leaders and what sort of performances they aspire to. They see storytelling as a mode of sense-giving and sense-making. In a similar way, Currie and Brown (2003) argue that stories are not only descriptive (and may not be that) but can be normative, carrying legitimacy for particular practices and identities. In their fieldwork, Humphreys and his co-researchers (2011) found repeated tellings of the same stories. For example, Duke Ellington was known for 'moulding the music around the man'. This meant that when he hired a new musician he would try to find the best 'fit' in the sound for that player. Ellington was also known as a great composer, but a repeated story was that he just wrote 'triggers' for the musicians so that they could express themselves, but he did this in such a way as to produce not just excellent individual performances but to enable the orchestra to play as 'one instrument'. There was a high level of stability in

the make up of Ellington's orchestra and this engendered trust and was part of what enabled them to play as a unit very effectively. Conversely, stories about Miles Davies tend to emphasize a very different approach and style of leadership. Davies would seek to hire the best musicians no matter where they came from or whether or not they would fit with the band. Indeed, some of his notable innovations as he went through different phases of musical style resulted from wholesale changes in his band to bring a completely new sound and approach. Unlike Ellington, Davies thought that improvisation was hampered, not helped, by musicians knowing each other and being comfortable together. Humphreys et al. (2011) found stories along these lines being used in the way that contemporary jazz band leaders practised their leadership. One band leader put it like this:

Miles hired such different musicians because he was always looking for a sound that was never created before. This is something I will be doing with my band too; I have a guy that is from Jamaica, another from Connecticut, Jersey. They never met each other before until they got into my band. (Sean Jones, cited in Humphreys et al., 2011, p. 49)

Autoethnography, and perhaps ethnography more generally, might be seen as a means of self-discovery in which the researcher is the research 'instrument' which becomes attuned over time through increasing knowledge of a culture and its (musical) practices. This is also informed by theoretical understanding which can direct attention for observation towards particular topics which may be nuanced in various ways. For example, playing jazz might be investigated through the lens of power as it relates to race, gender or forms of resistance. As a representation of a community of practice (or several communities of practice) the rules of 'the game' can be revealed concerning what is judged to be high quality musicianship, a truly novel improvisation, turn-taking during band playing, or the role of band leader, and these can be interrogated from perspectives such as

feminism which might produce particular critical interpretations of, for example, leadership. Thus, the identity of the autoethnographer will impact on what they observe/participate in and how they interpret the rules of the community.

ETHNOMUSICOLOGY, PRACTICE AND PARTICIPATION

The examples above have served, we hope, to illustrate briefly the sorts of insights that ethnomusicological studies might have to offer the worlds of business, management and organization research. Investigation into the structures of what Christopher Small (Small, 1998) called 'musicking' reveals how individuals in a community draw on and use music to shape, reshape, affirm and reaffirm the individual relationships that draw them together as a community. In pointing out these relationships, and the role that music can take even in the potentially depersonalized context of the workplace, ethnomusicology clearly offers direct insights into the way that communities are constituted. For the ethnomusicologist, music both reflects and is an agent of human relationships in a culture. Having touched on the methods of ethnomusicology above, we now revisit these to consider what insights these methods might have for qualitative research in business and management.

The first methodological cornerstone of the cases we have explored above is one that is shared by the vast majority of ethnomusicological studies: fieldwork. Throughout the ethnomusicological literature, the central importance of 'being there' (or having 'been there') is constantly underlined. We have already considered the problematic image of the heroic researcher stepping out into a (preferably) remote and 'primitive' culture to penetrate its secrets with a supposedly 'objective' study of its quaint musical rituals; in practice, and after a fairly shaky

start, ethnomusicology has become perhaps a model of respectful engagement with ‘other’ cultures, wherever these are found. Perhaps because of the difficulties that music can present to an outsider of any kind, ethnomusicological studies are notable for their patient, even dogged, approach: participant observation, interspersed with ethnographic interviews and the careful documentation of musical practices. This latter element of fieldwork has historically involved both recording and transcription (that is, the setting down of music in notation) and is a key point of distinction between ethnomusicology and more general ethnography. Approaches to documentation have evolved dramatically in response to the musics encountered: the self-evident problems with notating the musics of other cultures in the inflexible notation of European art music led, in the nineteenth century, to the development of the now conventional unit for pitch, the cent, which permits (say) the pitches of differently tuned scales to be compared systematically and with a (slightly) less obvious bias towards the supposed ‘norm’ of European music.

One result of ethnomusicology’s resolute focus on fieldwork is that studies tend to be localized – reflecting, perhaps, the capacity of a single researcher to immerse himself or herself successfully in a community or culture. And this tendency to focus on the particular means that ethnomusicological studies have, in general, avoided grand totalizing narratives, as ethnomusicologists endeavour to do justice both to the communities within which they have been embedded, and to an academic discipline that seeks high standards of reasoned argument based on high quality data.

A second result, a corollary of the first, is that ethnomusicologists tend to develop their insights from the data itself, rather than from overarching theories or hypotheses. A good deal of ethnomusicology from the mid-twentieth century is, in this sense, rooted in Grounded Theory *avant la lettre*. The Grounded Theory dictum ‘all is data’ resonates strongly for the ethnomusicologist.

What distinguishes ethnomusicology is the nature of the data that it draws upon – in addition to the interviews and observations of the ethnographer, the ethnomusicologist usually seeks to document and understand *as a musical human* the musical phenomena under consideration. She or he does this using a range of methods, but chief amongst them is learning to play or sing the music in question – by becoming, at some level, a music maker in the community or culture under study, by participating in the communal musical practices and understandings that are the focus of interest. This is the second methodological cornerstone of ethnomusicology.

The notion of ‘bi-musicality’ (or more recently ‘inter-musicality’) reflects the idea that significant insights are gained by taking part in the music-making itself, that the data is incomplete without the embodied experience of being a part of the community or culture – however provisionally and temporarily. Whereas ‘bi-musicality’ was conceived at a time when all ethnomusicologists were trained in the European tradition and therefore became ‘dual’ musicians as they were immersed in an ‘other’ culture, ‘inter-musicality’ more meaningfully attempts to reflect the myriad micro-cultures that are present within even a single individual’s musical identity, and the effect of adding to these the new musical culture under study.

This attention to, and participation in, the musicking itself is not restricted to learning instruments or songs: in Korczynski’s work on the use of music in a factory, we can only understand the relationships and strategies that are being enacted by the workers because we share with them an understanding of the music being used. Korczynski’s account would lose much of its meaning for a reader who could not hear – in her inner ear – Gloria Gaynor singing *I will survive*: although the title in this case directly reflects the theme of the song, it is the reader’s own direct musical experience of the song that allows her to understand the way the music is being co-opted as a means of resistance. The reader

takes a part in the communal musical experience shared with the workers in the study, the author and other readers who share the same cultural references.

The notion that significant insights may come from taking part in the musical activity itself might seem obvious – a given even – but this feature of ethnomusicological method marks something of a contrast with approaches in other disciplines. The notion here is that, commonly, the researcher might, as a basic requirement, have to *take a part* in the culture or community he or she studies, a part-taking that goes beyond observation (recognizing, of course, that observation will also, in reality, reshape the phenomena under investigation).

It might be tempting to see musicking as a special case of communal human activity that, perhaps uniquely, requires the researcher to engage at length in the actual practices under investigation, rather than moving quickly to the way they are organized, the patterns of production or the observable social phenomenon that they reflect or create. Certainly, music seems so full of meaning as to demand special attention in itself; but perhaps this is really just an intensification of a wider phenomenon related to the lived quality of human experience in a particular community. Other embodied experiences, such as the physicality of work, could equally fall into this category; however, a differentiating factor of music is the cultural aesthetic judgements attached to its production and consumption. These judgements and practices can influence the degree to which a person is experienced as a member of the culture.

The two cornerstones of ethnomusicological method – fieldwork and participation in the practices of a community or culture have significant resonance in business and management more generally. Practice-based studies and activity theory (Nicolini, 2012) have particular relevance in this regard. Engeström's (1990) activity theory has been applied and elaborated by Blackler et al. (2000) who focus on the connection between

individuals, communities and their objects of activity.

Activities imply the motives and goals of participants ... activities provide the link between the individual and society ... societies can be conceptualized as an interlacing pattern of different activities. (Blackler et al., 2000, p. 296).

According to this theory, as individuals operate in communities they operate around objects of activity which provide a focus and vehicle not only for the activities but also for people to develop and express their identities as individuals and community members. Although the term 'object' sounds physical, in fact an object can be entirely ephemeral and the production of sound could easily constitute such an object. Typically, communities develop tools and technologies to work on and produce the objects of activity, and in the case of music this could clearly include musical instruments, but equally it could include improvised and found objects used as instruments. Activity systems incorporate rules and procedures and, for example, a division of labour. Essentially, activity systems entail knowledge and learning. In some cases, this learning is codified in roles and rules, but in many cases, it is learned through socialization and is somewhat tacit, at least amongst the initiated. The musicking of one of the Jazz bands referred to above, for example, would be amenable to such an analysis. If the object of activity were to play a gig, there are particular roles and a division of labour, for example between band leader and other players, a distribution of playing roles according to skill and expertise and so on. Musical instruments are used, but there is also an important context – that of the venue, the arrangement of the players on a stage which physically and symbolically places the players together and apart from the audience. Some bands use the tool of music stands and read the music rather than memorizing it. Others play from memory or improvise, and so relatively simple tools, such as a music stand, by its presence or absence can

symbolically and practically permit one form of the practice and disallow another. The rules of the activity include how and when players will improvise, for how long and how turn-taking is managed. In addition, however, the rules also apply to non-musical parts of the activity, for example, who introduces songs and the sorts of phrases they use.

Meaningful activities are never absolutely individual as even a composer apparently acting alone is doing so in a social, cultural and historical context which provides the language and symbolism with which to accomplish meaning. This would explicitly be the case in the stories of Duke Ellington referred to above in which he composed with particular players in mind in order to get the best out of them. The social context is that it provides tools and structures of meaning which lay the basis for the actors to be able to act with intention.

Activities interact in a conceptual system and can be complementary, or there can be tensions between differing purposes and objects (Orlikowski, 2002). For example, the purpose of putting on a concert for some may be to produce wonderful music, whereas for others it may be to make a financial return or indeed to make productive use of a venue. In producing community music there may be several objects of activity at play, including, for example, providing entertainment for an audience, giving participants something pleasurable to do, building up the self-esteem of participants and producing music of a particular sort. The community is particularly important in negotiating priorities and symbolic meaning, allocating resources and enabling learning often based on informal cultural learning. However, it would often be a mistake to think of the community as a homogenous culture. Rather, plural cultures encompass people with different priorities and understandings of the situation such that the same object of activity, such as community musicking, could simultaneously have different meanings for several different sub-groups. In addition, given that individuals are complex in themselves, there could be a confluence of meanings for one person.

Hence, it is relevant for the ethnomusicologist to pose questions drawn from activity theory to explore what the (multiple) objects of activity are in musicking, who people are being, both individually and in their community, when they engage in this activity, how they produce and use tools for direct and indirect use, and what meanings for players, audiences and others are produced through the activity.

The significance of taking a part in the community or culture under investigation – of drawing data from the lived experience of being a part of the community – might have some significant ethical consequences. It will, for example, modify the power relationship between the researcher and the participants in the research: at a simple level, the researcher has to give up any semblance of superiority if she is to participate – as an outsider, as a guest, possibly as a beginner and certainly as someone with less experience – in the practices of a group under study. The power relationship tilts towards the participant, who becomes a true participant (as opposed to a ‘subject’). At a deeper level, the researcher is confronted with practical minutiae that may not be easily accounted for (or swept away by) existing theoretical approaches: the work of understanding meaning-making in a particular context becomes at once more difficult but also less vulnerable to theoretical ‘bad faith’. Finally, the researcher might better empathize with the people whose lives unfold within the structures he or she purports to understand – through taking part rather than a traditional analytical stance of ‘taking apart’.

CONCLUSION

Ethnomusicology is concerned with understanding the place of music in a culture and the role of culture in music. It normally adopts an ethnographic approach in which, in addition to observation, participation is increasingly emphasized. Along with the focus on participation, autoethnography,

especially when the researcher is working in his or her own culture, is often used as a method, as learning through undertaking a musical practice and reflecting both 'inwards' and 'outwards' provides a basis for rich insight and understanding. Ethnomusicology is broader in subject than musicology in that it is interested in diverse sources of data (including, for example, documentary sources such as magazines, websites, fan literature and so on, ethnographic interviews and cultural observation) in order to understand the meaning(s) of music within and for a community or culture. It has a tighter focus than general ethnography in that it always has music as a central cultural feature that is being examined, but this still leaves a broad field of interest across the full range of musics and cultures. In this chapter we have drawn examples from factory work and the use of pop songs, jazz and community music-making, but equally there is considerable interest in orchestral music, music as part of resisting the power of capital, small scale 'DIY' and punk music, to name just a few. Ethnomusicology normally adopts an interpretivist, relativist epistemology, rather than seeking to make any predictive generalizations, and is not uncommonly associated with a radical or critical epistemology in which arguing for change or against prevalent forms of power is part of the research. We have suggested above that ethnomusicology fits well with a practice theory or activity theory approach, which would indicate a complementary form of research to that in the organizational literature which focuses on communities, their ways of knowing and practising (e.g. Nicolini, 2012). Ethnomusicology brings a particular emphasis on embodied practice and aesthetics (e.g. Strati, 1999) to such research approaches. Therefore, we would see ethnomusicology as a well-established form of research which is increasingly being applied in the field of business and management. It fits with major paradigms of critical and interpretivist research and with movements towards practice-based theorizing. Applying the concept of

inter-musicality does, however, provide a challenge in that it requires the researcher to have sufficient musical ability in order to participate. However, given that participation through learning can be a particularly insightful way of gaining understanding of a community, and that the use of music in amateur ways (for example in the factory research) does not require high levels of musical accomplishment, this may be less of a barrier than has been assumed to date.

Business and management research has now broadened into interests not only with commercial companies and public sector organizations but also to seeking a contextualized understanding of organizing as part of society. Music is a fundamental part of cultures and communities and seeking to gain insight into music beyond its commercial production is entirely appropriate as part of the business and management research agenda. Ethnomusicology provides a method (or set of methods) which have been used in interesting ways in business and management, often in understanding how music is organized (Beech et al., 2015) or as a way of elaborating organizing more generally (e.g. Humphreys et al., 2003). We would suggest that there is considerably greater potential for the use of ethnomusicology in business and management research, particularly in addressing questions of knowledge, power and resistance, embodied practice and aesthetics in many forms of organizing in which music (literally) plays a part.

Application Questions

We would suggest that ethnomusicology can contribute to business and management research by posing questions that relate to and complement research questions posed in other methodologies. A non-exhaustive list is:

- 1 ***Production and consumption*** – how are musical products and events conceived, supported, produced and consumed? What do

these processes say about the cultures of which they are part and how do the cultures enable and come into being through music?

- 2 **Identity and diversity** – how is music used as a mode of producing and performing personal and social identities? What meanings are shared, and what are not? How is identity in music performed both as active and re-active concept (for example, as a form of resistance)?
- 3 **Change and tradition** – how does music represent continuity and extension of symbolic significances from the past to the future and how does it adapt incrementally or through disjunctures?
- 4 **Technique and technology** – how do modes of producing music impact on the nature of the music and its social position for example as an expensive and elite skill or a democratic and participatory activity? How do the tools available for use influence practices, and how are tools and technologies created and improvised in musicking?
- 5 **Value and purpose** – how does music connect to, and inform, social structures, judgements, status and mediated uses (e.g. producing commercial outcomes)? What role does aesthetics and aesthetic judgement play in music-making? What embedded/implicit structures of community are revealed in or through the music?
- 6 **Practising and knowing** – how are skills and knowledge in music acquired, and how do they relate to sub-cultures and communities of practice? Beyond highly technical performance, how are listening, joining in and subverting performed as musical practices?

REFERENCES

- Baily, J. (2001) Learning to perform as a research technique in ethnomusicology. *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, 10(2): 85–98.
- Barrett, F.J. (1998) Creativity and improvisation in jazz and organizations: Implications for organizational learning. *Organization Science*, 9(5): 605–22.
- Beech, N., Broad, S., Cunliffe, A., Duffy, C. and Gilmore, C. (2015) Developments in organization theory and organising music, in Beech, N. and Gilmore, C. (eds) *Organising Music*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Bendrup, D. (2006) Researchers, musicians or record producers? Negotiating roles and responsibilities in music ethnography. *Context: Journal of Music Research*, 31: 21–35.
- Blacking, J. (1973) *How Musical is Man?* Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.
- Blackler, F., Crump, N. and McDonald, S. (2000) Organizing processes in complex activity networks. *Organization*, 7(2): 277–300.
- Cloonan, M. (2015) Managing the Zoeys, in Beech, N. and Gilmore, C. (eds) *Organising Music*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Cross, I. (2005) Music and meaning, ambiguity and evolution, in Miell, D., MacDonald, R. and Hargreaves, D.J. (eds) *Musical Communication*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Currie, G. and Brown, A.D. (2003) A narratological approach to understanding processes of organizing in a UK hospital. *Human Relations*, 56(5): 563–86.
- Deane, K. and Mullen, P. (2013) Community music in the United Kingdom, in Veblen, K.K., Messenger, S.J., Silverman, M. and Elliott, D.J. (eds) *Community Music Today*. Plymouth, UK: Rowan & Littlefield.
- DeNora, T. (2000) *Music in Everyday Life*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Engerstrom, Y. (1990) *Learning, working and imagining: Twelve studies in activity theory*. Helsinki: Orientat Konsultit.
- Engeström, Y. (1990) *Learning, Working and Imagining: Twelve Studies in Activity Theory*. Helsinki: Orienta-Konsultit.
- Frith, S., Cloonan, M. and Williamson, J. (2009) On music as a creative industry, in Pratt, A.C. and Jeffcutt, P. (eds) *Creativity, Innovation and the Cultural Economy*. London: Routledge.
- Gabor, E. (2013) 'Tuning' the body of the classical musician. *Qualitative Research in Organisations and Management*, 8(3): 206–23.
- Gabriel, Y., Fineman, S. and Sims, D. (2000) *Organizing and Organizations*. London: Sage.
- Glaser, B.G. and Strauss, A.L. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. London: Aldine Transaction.
- Hargreaves, D.J., MacDonald, R. and Miell, D. (2005) How do people communicate using music? In Miell, D., MacDonald, R. and

- Hargreaves, D.J. (eds) *Musical Communication*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Higgins, L. (2012) *Community Music in Theory and in Practice*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Hood, M. (1960) The challenge of 'bi-musicality'. *Ethnomusicology*, 4(2): 55–9.
- Humphreys, M., Brown, A.D. and Hatch, M.J. (2003) Is ethnography jazz? *Organization*, 10(1): 5–31.
- Humphreys, M., Ucbasaran, D. and Lockett, A. (2011) Sensemaking and sensegiving stories of jazz leadership. *Human Relations*, 65(1): 41–62.
- Jones, S. and Schumacher, T. (1992) Muzak: On functional music and power. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 9(2): 156–69.
- Kempster, S. and Stewart, J. (2010) Becoming a leader: A co-produced autoethnographic exploration of situated learning of leadership practice. *Management Learning*, 41(2): 205–19.
- Korczynski, M. (2007) Music and meaning on the factory floor. *Work and Occupations*, 34(3): 253–89.
- Korczynski, M. (2011) *Stayin' Alive* on the factory floor: An ethnography of the dialectics of music use in the routinized workplace. *Poetics*, 39(2): 87–106.
- Kushner, S., Walker, B. and Tarr, J. (2001) *Case Studies and Issues in Community Music*. Bristol, UK: University of West of England.
- Littleton, K. and Mercer, N. (2013) *Interthinking: Putting Talk to Work*. London: Routledge.
- Lombos, G. (1998) Finding the community in youth music projects. *Sounding Board*, Spring: 12–13.
- Miell, D. and Littleton, K. (2008) Musical collaboration outside school: Processes of negotiation in band rehearsals. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 47(1): 41–9.
- Negus, K. (1996) *Popular Music in Theory*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Nettl, B. (2005) *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty One Issues and Concepts*. Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Nicolini, D. (2012) *Practice Theory, Work and Organization*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Orlikowski, W.J. (2002) Knowing in practice: Enacting a collective capability in distributed organizing. *Organization Science*, 13(3): 249–73.
- Parry, K.W. and Boyle, M. (2009) Organizational autoethnography, in Buchanan, D. and Bryman, A. (eds) *Handbook of Organizational Research Methods*. London: Sage.
- Pratt, A.C. and Jeffcutt, P. (2009) Creativity, innovation and the cultural economy: Snake oil for the twenty-first century? In Pratt, A.C. and Jeffcutt, P. (eds) *Creativity, Innovation and the Cultural Economy*. London: Routledge.
- Rice, T. (1997) Toward a mediation of field methods and field experience in ethnomusicology, in Barz, G.F. and Cooley, T.J. (eds) *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Sawyer, R.K. (2012) *Explaining Creativity: The Science of Human Innovation*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Small, C. (1998) *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Strati, A. (1999) *Organization and Aesthetics*. London: Sage.
- Zack, M.H. (2000) Jazz improvisation and organizing: Once more from the top. *Organization Science*, 11(2): 227–34.

Advances in Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA): Application of Fuzzy Set in Business and Management Research

Ursula F. Ott, Rudolf R. Sinkovics and
Samia Ferdous Hoque

INTRODUCTION

Following on from the seminal book of Charles Ragin in 1987, qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) has gained increasing acceptance in social science research for systematic comparative case analysis (Rihoux, 2006). The QCA approach is built upon the set-theoretic comparative technique, primarily Boolean algebra, and has been introduced as a 'synthetic strategy' for integrating the strengths of qualitative and quantitative methods while overcoming the key concerns inherent in both the approaches (Ragin 1987, p. 84). Berg-Schlosser and De Meur (2009, p. 17) define it as 'a nonlinear, non-additive, non-probabilistic conception that rejects any form of permanent causality and that stresses equifinality (different paths can lead to the same outcome), complex combinations of conditions, and diversity'. The Boolean or crisp set technique is the first

QCA version, while fuzzy set technique is a more recent extension (Ragin, 2000, 2008a). Unlike crisp sets that assign dichotomous membership, fuzzy sets permit partial membership in a category, meaning both causal and outcome variables can be multichotomous (Stokke, 2007).

Although social science research has a long-lasting tradition of prioritising variable-oriented quantitative methods, the popularity of case-oriented qualitative techniques has also been developing at a steady pace (Ragin, 1994; Ragin & Becker 1992). Nevertheless, case-oriented qualitative research is often criticised to be weak in terms of external validity for placing an overly emphasis on the specifics of an individual case. The internal validity is also in question considering the method's inability to choose between various possible or plausible explanations of a phenomenon. This problem, regarded as degrees-of-freedom or 'small-N problem', means that

‘there are too few observations relative to the set of variables under consideration to determine the relative significance of the causal factors’ (Stokke, 2007, p. 501). Qualitative researchers tend to compensate for this issue by paying attention to complexity and depth in a given case (Ragin & Becker, 1992). In this respect, Ragin (1987, p. 51) argues that the term ‘small-N problem’ misrepresents the challenge confronting case-oriented research, since ‘it is not the number of relevant cases that limits the selection of method ... but the nature of the method that limits the number of cases and the number of different causal conditions that the investigator is able to consider’. The QCA technique is designed to overcome this small-N problem and is equipped to handle only a limited number of cases. The approach will not only increase the number of cases but also will find similarities and differences across cases on a configuration of causal conditions in order to identify patterns with possibilities for modest level generalisation (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009).

Although initially applied in political and historical sciences, QCA offers particular promise to organisational researchers (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). Fiss (2007, p. 1180) argues that ‘organisations are best understood as clusters or interconnected structures and practices, rather than as modular or loosely coupled entities whose components can be understood in isolation’. The QCA approach is fundamentally based on the idea that the patterns and attributes will exhibit different features and lead to different outcomes depending on how they are arranged. Therefore, the approach stresses nonlinearity and synergy of depth and breadth within and across cases (Ragin, 2014), which is typical of real-world qualitative research (cf. Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012). However, this contrasts with a long tradition of organisational research in the application of econometric or statistical tools which imply linearity.

Against this context, the use of QCA in the field of management is beneficial for the understanding of complex management

phenomena. It combines qualitative investigation with quantitative analysis. A recent *Journal of Business Research* special issue (Roig-Tierno et al., 2016) published 46 articles on QCA and illustrates the potential for management research. In their lucid overview article, Seny Kan et al. (2016) show that 95 articles use QCA in management research. Their classification highlights its use in general management, marketing, innovation, strategy, human resources, organisation studies and operational research. The result of their article suggests that researchers apply QCA to four management situations: the internal environment, the external environment, links within and between these environments, and the optimal way to question management phenomena. The use of QCA in the special issue extends the application to entrepreneurial activity, organisational strategy and management performance (Roig-Tierno et al., 2016).

To this end, the purpose of this chapter involves presenting, discussing and explaining the QCA method and highlighting the application of the method in business and management research. The chapter is, therefore, organised in the following way: first, we present the QCA approach discussing its history, epistemology and key methodological features; second, we shed light on the progress in the application of the QCA approach by highlighting the patterns thus far; and finally, we detail the method for its application and exemplify the conceptual considerations presented earlier. The chapter concludes with a summary and suggestions regarding future avenues for using QCA approach in the field of management research.

BACKGROUND ON QCA AND fsQCA

QCA is the umbrella name for two main types of techniques: crisp set qualitative comparative analysis (csQCA) and fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA)

(Rihoux, 2006). Both methods are designed to transfer subjective data into numeric ones by assigning values of either 0 and 1 (crisp) or in between 0 and 1 (fuzzy). csQCA was the original version of QCA and is built upon the binary language that George Boole developed in the mid-1800s. The Boolean algebra is also the mathematical basis of computer technology. Boolean algebra does not manipulate numbers but rather systematises logical expressions in order to sort data and create a list of the configurations of circumstances associated with a given outcome (Stokke, 2007). The application of crisp logic for systematic comparative procedures dates back to the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, primarily in natural sciences (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009).

fsQCA is a much later extension to QCA and is built upon the fuzzy set theory (Ragin, 2008a). The introduction of fuzzy set theory dates back to the 1960s with the publication of seminal articles by Zadeh (1965) and Goguen (1969). Zimmermann (2010) highlighted that the development of fuzzy set has mainly been in two key areas: first, as a formal theory with increasing sophistication and specification being added to the original ideas and concepts of Zadeh (1965); and second, as fuzzy-oriented application in problem solving and research. The acceptance of fuzzy set gained momentum between the 1960s and 1970s with its first application in controlling technological processes. The successful use of a fuzzy rule-based system, namely fuzzy control, in the manufacturing of washing machines, video cameras, subway trains and heavy machineries by Japanese technology firms triggered the interest in further application of the method in scientific research during the 1980s.

The application of classical set theory in social science research followed from a seminal volume by Charles Ragin (1987). In a series of publications (e.g. Ragin, 1987, 1994), Ragin introduced the use of csQCA in social science research. During the 1980s and 1990s, csQCA was mostly applied in political

science (comparative politics) and historical sociology (welfare state studies) research. As a result, csQCA was initially adopted in the social sciences as a tool for macro-level studies involving entire societies, economies, states or other complex social and cultural formations. The organisational researchers have applied the method in meso-level (i.e. firm-level) studies in recent years (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009).

Zadeh (1965) argues that fuzziness is contained in human language, including human judgement, evaluation and decisions. Drawing upon this argument, Ragin (2000) contends that fuzzy set theory can be a powerful tool to capture the fuzzy nature of human language that has remained difficult thus far through the application of dichotomising techniques of csQCA. Therefore, built on crisp sets' csQCA, the key strength of fsQCA lies in providing the variance of the observations.

Developed around the Boolean binary logic (scores of 0 and 1), csQCA assigns membership to cases across a configuration of condition, in which a score of '1' reflects 'full membership' and '0' reflects 'no membership' in a specific set of conditions. While csQCA assigns dichotomous membership ('yes=1' or 'no=0') to the cases across a set of conditions, fsQCA addresses degree of membership in sets by assigning intermediary numbers between 0 and 1 (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). Ragin (2008a, p. 30) claims 'fuzzy sets have many of the virtues of conventional interval and ratio-scale variables, but at the same time they permit qualitative assessment'. For instance, in the fsQCA approach, a membership score of 1.0 indicates full membership in a set; scores close to 1.0 (e.g. 0.8 or 0.9) indicate strong but not quite full membership in a set; scores less than 0.5 but greater than 0.0 (e.g. 0.2 or 0.3) indicate that objects are more 'out' of than 'in' a set, but still weak members of the set; a score of 0.0 indicates full non-membership in a set. The score 0.5 reflects maximum ambiguity or fuzziness in the assessment of whether a case is more in

or out of a set. Thus the variables (condition and outcome) can be calibrated aiding the construction of the truth table through use of substantial theoretical knowledge and evidences from cases (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). As pointed by Ragin and Amoroso (2011), fuzzy sets are simultaneously quantitative and qualitative: full membership and full non-membership are qualitative states, while varying degrees of membership are quantitative measurements ranging from more out (closer to value 0) to more in (closer to value 1).

Epistemologically, the QCA approach (both csQCA and fsQCA) is a middle way between the case-oriented qualitative research and variable-oriented quantitative research (Rihoux, 2006). On the one hand, the qualitative approach emphasises the complexity of a social phenomenon and offers in-depth detail about a small number of cases/instances. On the other, the quantitative approach is interested in generalisation and finding patterns that are evident in a large number of cases/instances. One of the key criticisms of the quantitative approach relates to its difficulty in addressing actors' underlying motives to certain responses, observing the subjectivities and sequences of the events, and deriving the causal connections. Qualitative methods, by contrast, excel in these areas. However, with a qualitative approach, it is difficult to claim that the findings are generalisable due to its reliance on a small number of cases. Despite this methodological divide, qualitative and quantitative approaches could be complementary and mutually dependent. For instance, qualitative researchers often cite general patterns that they have learned from previous quantitative studies in order to explain case-specific phenomena. On the other hand, quantitative researchers also cite unobserved case-level mechanisms to explain the cross-case patterns they document. This complementarity and mutual dependence underpins the idea of building a bridge and finding a middle ground where concerns of both worlds can be met (Ragin, 2000). The QCA approach offers this middle ground

between the issue of generality as portrayed in quantitative study and complexity in qualitative study.

Ragin (1987) contends that the QCA approach resolves some of the methodological issues inherent in qualitative and quantitative approaches and strengthens the connection between the two approaches. The QCA (and fsQCA) approach has its fundamental tie with case-oriented research, which has the unique strengths of understanding the cases within their context, the causations in conjunction and outcome as results of combinations of conditions. While clutching these unique strengths of case-oriented approach, QCA is developed to formalise those by using Boolean algebra. Nevertheless, case-oriented researchers often claim that their findings are specific to individual cases and, thus, faced with a large number of cases, they find it difficult to sustain their attention to complexity and also to address the similarities and differences across many cases. By contrast, a variable-oriented approach is more interested in variables across a large number of cases to find correlation between those, and in the process, the cases lose their identity and the context gets overlooked. While holding its case-oriented tradition, QCA is designed to handle a larger number of cases at the same time, examining the causal complexity in those cases by avoiding the simplifying principles of variable-oriented research. It is, therefore, a 'synthetic strategy' that is interested in both within-case and cross-case analysis (Ragin, 2014, p. 84). On the one hand, the emphasis on breadth as in the variable-oriented approach is retained through analysis of more than just a handful of cases, which is seldom done in case-oriented research; on the other hand, the attention to depth is given by focusing exclusively on the specificity of individual cases and maintaining intimacy with the context (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009).

Rihoux and Ragin (2009) had listed four key features of QCA: i) causality, complexity and parsimony; ii) modest generalisation; iii) ideas and theory; and iv) data, replicability

and transparency. First, in QCA, approach causation is typically understood conjuncturally, as combinations of conditions. It is interested in causal complexity, which Ragin (2008a, p. 23) defines as 'a situation in which an outcome may follow from several different combinations of causal conditions, that is, from different recipes'. These configurations of causally relevant conditions are compared across cases to link those to outcomes (Ragin, 2008a, 2014). The key tool for analysing causal complexity in QCA is the truth table, a tool that allows structure-focused comparisons (the process of constructing a truth table is detailed in the methodology section). In comparative analysis, causal conditions do not compete with each other, as they do in variable-oriented analysis while deriving correlations; they rather act in combination to generate a specific outcome. Again, different combination of conditions may also lead to the same outcome, for example, different social forces leading to the emergence of welfare states in Western Europe (e.g. Alber, 1995). Thus Rihoux and Ragin (2009, p. 8) refer to this characteristic as 'multiple conjunctural causation' in which, the word 'multiple' refers to the different paths to produce the same outcome, and 'conjunctural' conveys that each path is a combination of conditions.

Second, the QCA approach allows comparing small to intermediate numbers of cases (referred to as 'small-N' or 'intermediate-N' (Ragin, 1987)) as a configuration to identify similarities and differences across cases. The cases are compared in a truth table to identify the ones displaying identical configurations of causal conditions and the ones differing on one or more causally relevant conditions (Ragin, 2014). This process allows the finding of patterns among a low number of cases, such as 2, to an intermediate number of cases, say 50 to 100. Therefore, QCA is equipped to support 'modest generalisation' in a small-N or intermediate-N situation (Ragin, 1987, p. 31). This systematic comparative analysis facilitates formulating propositions which can then be applied to other similar cases

(of course, with caution). However, the robustness of generalisation is greater in variable-oriented research, allowing very broad generalisation (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009).

Third, the QCA approach facilitates a dialogue between theory and cases. The cases are considered as a specific combination of properties within a specific context – a 'whole entity', while in variable-oriented research, the cases and context are lost in the course of variable search and analysis (Ragin, 2014). Therefore, the research needs to have in-depth understanding of the cases, which aids the identification and development of the configuration of the conditions. The cases are not randomly selected from a population, but rather are carefully selected in consultation with historians, country experts and others, and each case is well known having an identity rather than being anonymous. Therefore, the processes of selecting the understanding of the cases are holistic and inductive. The choice of conditions also needs to be theoretically informed, which adds a deductive dimension to the QCA approach. The theoretical knowledge also contributes to the selection of the cases, including the exceptions and outliers and also treatment of the contradictory configurations, i.e. the cases that display the same values on the condition variables but which lead to different outcomes (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). The interpretation of the findings should also have to be derived from theoretical knowledge. With having both deductive and inductive aspects embedded in the process, QCA is equipped to generate mid-range theories (Rihoux, 2006).

Finally, with the use of Boolean algebra, the QCA offers tools that are both formalised and replicable. The QCA allows assigning numbers to data that are originally subjective in nature and thus making the study replicable. The process of selection of variables, processing them and intervening during the analysis are transparent. The researcher has to constantly refer to the case and go back-and-forth, which requires a rich data and theoretical knowledge. Thus the approach is not a

mere mechanical and ‘push-button’ oriented one, but rather requires researchers’ constant engagement, which makes the process more transparent (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009).

QCA IN BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

The rationale for why researchers use QCA in management is that the complexity of the management phenomena and the understanding the management practices asks for more refined modes of investigation: an in-depth knowledge of the cases and a robust manner to analyse them. QCA has three variants – crisp set, multi-value and fuzzy set. Seny Kan et al. (2016) investigated the use of QCA in management research and found that in most articles it serves the renewal of the understanding of management situations. QCA can be positioned between exploration and hypothesis testing, and it has an original role in strengthening knowledge generation through a dialogue between case studies and theory. Finally, QCA is helpful in limiting the recurrence of mismatches between theory and methods in management research. The authors emphasise that the QCA has two forms of explanatory paths: 1) a specific management reality could have a multiplicity of causal paths – equifinality; and 2) an asymmetric nature of management phenomena. Overall, QCA offers the depth of qualitative research and a coherence for understanding the configurations of the antecedents leading to the outcome of a phenomenon. Many paths can lead to an outcome in managerial research. Seny Kan et al. (2016) show that fuzzy set is the most common of the three variants of QCA and the studies were empirical, theoretical and methodological. Important for the use of cases is that the unit of analysis can be organisation, individual, country or state. This chapter highlights the recent developments in QCA in management research and positions it in this respect.

The scope of small-N to full-N enables fsQCA to be used in qualitative and quantitative investigations. FsQCA in the latter is mostly used to complement quantitative findings in providing asymmetric relationships of the analysis. The fsQCA approach in qualitative research gives the robustness of the results and the generalisability of the findings. The critiques of qualitative research can be circumvented in this case, since validity, reliability and authenticity of the results are positioned in a more convincing way with fsQCA. With fsQCA, the researcher can distinguish between necessary and sufficient conditions for the occurrence of managerial phenomena and by being able to do this, a central criticism of management research – the lack of actionability (Seny Kan et al., 2016) can be addressed.

The use of fsQCA in business research can be considered in a more structured way after the publication of more than 100 articles. Seny Kan et al. (2016) and Roig-Tierno et al. (2016) provide classifications of the articles using fsQCA in management research. Figure 25.1 shows the frequency of fsQCA use in the respective functional areas of management.

Interviewing actors on different organisational levels helps to find out about organisational and managerial phenomena which need an exploratory approach for knowledge generation. Seny Kan et al. (2016) moved away from a functional perspective and focused on the four configurations discussed below.

Internal Environment

Mostly organisational structure and strategy papers use fsQCA for their investigation into procedures, strategies and performance.

External Environment

The relationship of the actors with customers, suppliers, HQ and governmental bodies



Figure 25.1 The use of fsQCA in management research (Seny Kan et al. 2016)

benefits from an in-depth analysis of the cases for managerial research.

Entrepreneurship Activities

As a new approach towards understanding small enterprises, interviewing entrepreneurs shows a valid empirical and theoretical unit of analysis by focusing on the individual and the decision-making of business leaders.

Innovation and Performance

This stream of research in fsQCA is important and transferred to many different levels

from individual to country and shows the reliability of the findings in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions for the outcome.

The recent Special Issue of set theory (fsQCA) in the *Journal of Business Research* (69: 4) can be seen in structuring fsQCA in management according to entrepreneurial, organisational and performance configurations in management. Table 25.1 summarises the extensive use of fsQCA in this respect.

The applications for fsQCA are manifold and offer a research agenda for many years to come. The next section offers an example fsQCA application.

Table 25.1 Recent business papers using fsQCA (organisational, entrepreneurial and firm performance topics)

<i>Business paper</i>	<i>Journal</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Approach</i>	<i>Level of analysis</i>
Coduras, Clemente and Ruiz (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Global Entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurial attitudes and social values of adult populations toward entrepreneurship	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor data
Beynon, Jones and Pickernell (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Entrepreneurship	Relationship between entrepreneurial attitudes and activity	cross-country comparison
Chaparro-Peláez, Agudo-Peregrina and Pascual-Miguel (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Drivers and inhibitors of e-commerce adoption	Electronic commerce behavior	
Jenson, Leith, Doyle, West, and Miles (2016)	Journal of Business Research	innovation system failure	innovation systems theory	multiple case study
Kuckertz, Berger, and Mpega (2016)	Journal of Business Research	entrepreneurial activity in the application to	factor-driven, efficiency-driven, and innovation-driven economies	
Domenech, Escamilla, and Roig-Tierno (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Knowledge-intensive activities from a regional	causal model to explain how these factors affect knowledge-intensive activities	
Leischnig and Kasper-Brauer (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Firm profitability	Selling	a two-level approach to industry factors and selling factors
Muñoz and Kibler (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Social entrepreneurship. institutional complexity of social entrepreneurship and explain under which	Institutional Theory	combinations of local institutional forces social entrepreneurs build opportunity confidence.
Lisboa, Skarameas, and Saridakis (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Entrepreneurship	entrepreneurial orientation towards firm performance	causal mechanisms by which those factors collectively affect performance
Ospina-Delgado and Zorio-Grima (2016)	Journal of Business Research	innovation at universities	complex cause-effect relationship between innovation and the supply of university courses	
Wang, Yu, and Chiang (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Value relevance of corporate reputation	Corporate reputation	Taiwan listed companies
Mozas-Moral, Moral-Pajares, Medina-Viruel, and Bernal-Jurado (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Manager's educational background and ICT	Export decisions.	corporate

(Continued)

Table 25.1 Recent business papers using fsQCA (organisational, entrepreneurial and firm performance topics) (Continued)

<i>Business paper</i>	<i>Journal</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Approach</i>	<i>Level of analysis</i>
Benavides Espinosa and Merigó Lindahl (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Organizational design as a learning enabler	different design variables and their effect on organizational learning	
Wu (2016)	Journal of Business Research	International marketing strategy modeling of a leisure farm	international marketing strategies, and performance	leisure farm context
Simón-Moya and Revuelto-Taboada (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Revising the predictive capability of business plan quality for new firm survival	between business plan quality and survival rates of new ventures	
Cobo-Benita, Rodríguez-Segura, Ortiz-Marcos, and Ballesteros-Sánchez (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Innovation projects performance	organizational theory	large sample of firms in Spain appearing in the Community Innovation survey
Bergmann, Stechemesser, and Guenther (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Financial performance and natural resource dependence theory	natural resource dependence theory	
Lassala, Carmona, and Momparler (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Alternative paths to high consulting fees	customer satisfaction	
Felício, Duarte, and Rodrigues (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Global mindset to SME internationalization	SMEs' internationalization behavior	relationship between IGM and CGM
Adame, Capliure, and Miquel (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Women's presence in the workplace	work-life balance policies	
Urueña and Hidalgo (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Loyalty in e-complaints	customer loyalty	a sample of e-commerce users who file complaints after shopping online
Alegre, Mas-Machuca, and Berbegal-Mirabent (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Employee job satisfaction	(1) teamwork, (2) employee work-family balance, and (3) supervisor support and identification with the strategy	
Whittington and Bell (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Employee performance, commitment and citizenship behaviors	Leadership and motivational constructs	
Pinazo-Dallenbach, Mas-Tur, and Lloria (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurial characteristics (i.e. education, gender, motivation, and age) and environmental variables (i.e. citizen insecurity)	high-potential firms

Comeig, Grau-Grau, Jaramillo-Gutiérrez, and Ramírez (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Relationship with competition preferences and the different paths that may lead to enter competition	Entry Strategy	
Bigné, Linares, and Torrecilla (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Consumer choice, customer experience, and shopping behavior in a store – virtual reality	Customer behaviour, Neuroscience	virtual reality-based study
Fiss, Frambach, and Ingenbleek	Journal of Business Research	Customer orientation and superior firm performance	Configurational, strategic orientations, strategy types, and market conditions	
Kulins, Leonardy, and Weber (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Relationship between business model, design, and financial performance	Configurational	
Romero, Lafont, Tafur, and Eiguren (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Performance and value creation at United Kingdom's airports	Governance, revenue structure, airlines, passengers, and strategy	
Berbegal-Mirabent and Llopis-Albert	Journal of Business Research	Driving forces in collaborative research contracts of science-industry R&D partnerships	human capital experience, the profile, and the capacity attraction affect the performance	
González-Cruz and Cruz-Ros (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Family involvement produce superior performance in SME family business	SME family businesses	
Seny Kan, Adegbite, El Omari, and Abdellatif (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Comprehensive review of the uses of QCA in the field of management research	Organizing the field, the study identifies current management issues of interest	
Nair and Gibbert (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Analyzing inconsistent cases in management fsQCA studies	Theory-building of deviant cases	
Ferreira, Jalali, and Ferreira (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Fuzzy cognitive maps (FCMs) serve as support in the selection of independent variables	specific FCM to integrate in the QCA guidelines.	
Fotiadis, Yeh, and Huan (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Rural tourism success recipes	Configurational analysis, collaborational skills	
Gonçalves, Lourenço, and Silva (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Consumption values predict green buying behavior	Emotional, conditional, and social values to predict the buying green behavior	
Hernández-García, Iglesias-Prada, and Fernández-Cardador (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Causal recipes for acceptance and refusal of corporate blogs	Sharing knowledge in the organization	

(Continued)

Table 25.1 Recent business papers using fsQCA (organisational, entrepreneurial and firm performance topics) (Continued)

<i>Business paper</i>	<i>Journal</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Approach</i>	<i>Level of analysis</i>
Hernández-Perlines, Moreno- García, and Yáñez-Araque (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Absorption capacity in the training process that can increase the performance of organizations	Absorptive capacity	
Phu Hai, Roig-Dobón and Sánchez-García (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Public policy for innovative governance	Innovation	
Jacobs, Cambré, Huysentruyt, and Schramme (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Success in the fashion Industry and dominant logic, organizational life cycle	Concepts of organizational life cycle	
Ott and Kimura (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Negotiations in Japanese Multinational Enterprises	Bargaining theory	Firm-level
Fan et al. (2016)	International Business Review	The factors that influence localised learning by Chinese multinationals who have made FDI in Australia	Dynamic capability	Firm-level
López-Duarte, Vidal-Suárez, and González-Díaz (2015)	Cross Cultural Management	Study the influence of cultural positions on the choice of entry mode in foreign direct investment (FDI)	Cultural Distance Paradox	Country-level
Marchi, Vignola, Facchinetti, and Mastroleo (2014)	European Journal of Marketing	Examining the factors that influence the international market decision making process of small firms	Behaviour-based international market decision making process	Country-level and Firm-level
Greckhamer (2011)	Organizational Studies	Investigates whether combinations of cultural and macro-environmental attributes are associated with differences in compensation level and compensation inequality in different countries	Compensation and culture	Country-level
Crilly (2011)	Journal of International Business Studies	Investigates the conditions under which overseas subsidiaries accept a shareholder-centric approach as against a stakeholder-centric approach to management	Stakeholder orientation	Firm-level
Fiss (2011)	AoM Journal	Organizational Theory and configurations	Organization Theory	
Kvist (2007)	Journal of Business Research	Configurational Approach in Business Research	Organization Theory	

fsQCA APPLICATION EXAMPLE

This example uses Ragin's (2008b) manual for fsQCA software as a guide on how to work with the collected data and transfer it into fsQCA results. The example below goes back to Ragin (2008a) and Rihoux and Ragin (2009). This is especially beneficial, since the country comparisons chosen are an important approach to provide a classification and calibration for an introduction into fsQCA. The data is in general collected with an Excel spreadsheet and then saved with comma separated (.csv) format, which will lead to the screenshot shown in Figure 25.2 when starting the fsQCA programme.

From interviewing to calibration, the data collection with interviews benefits from the in-depth knowledge of the researcher. As Ragin (2008a) points out, the researcher needs to know the subject, interviews, theory and method well to be able to generate new insights with fsQCA. The number of interviews or cases can be from small N to medium N. Large N are only used to compare quantitative studies (regression models of

symmetric relationships) with fsQCA (asymmetric relationships). The interview data can then be structured into themes which make up the conditions (antecedent, concurrent and consequential). The example below uses gross domestic product, manufacturing sector, strong unions, etc. (macroeconomic conditions for country perspectives). The next step is the generation of a calibration table in which the qualitative results are translated into memberships of sets. Full membership in a set is considered at 1 and an empty set is 0. All the grey levels in between will be positioned between break points (0.5, 0.33 and 0.67, 0.2, 0.4, 0.6 and 0.8). This is the important part for the transfer from qualitative to quantitative analysis. Figure 25.2 shows therefore values between 0 and 1.

The screenshot in Figure 25.3 shows the cases in the first column and the conditions generated from the calibration table. In this case *gdpf* stands for affluent, *inqf* is substantial income inequality, *manf* is strong manufacturing sector, *unf* is strong unions and *weakcv* stands for weak class voting (Ragin, 2008b, 75). To generate a truth table analysis,

Case	name	gdpf	inqf	manf	unf	weakcv
1	AUS	0.9	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.7
2	BEL	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.9	0.7
3	DEN	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.9	0.1
4	FRA	0.7	0.9	0.1	0.1	0.9
5	GER	0.7	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.7
6	IRE	0.1	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.9
7	ITA	0.3	0.9	0.1	0.7	0.7
8	NET	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.9
9	NOR	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.9	0.1
10	SWE	0.9	0.3	0.9	1	0
11	UKN	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.3
12	USA	1	0.9	0.3	0.1	1

File: CV1379.CSV

Figure 25.2 FsQCA Data sheet after Calibration in .csv

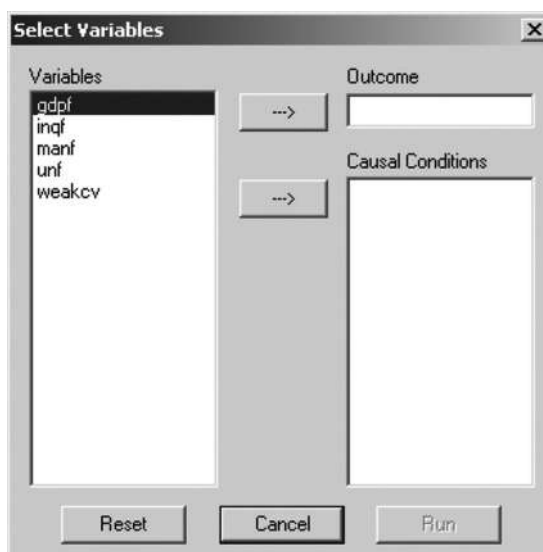


Figure 25.3 Selection of conditions

the user will need to go to 'Analyze' and then to 'Fuzzy Sets' and 'Truth Table Algorithm'. The screenshot in Figure 25.3 should guide the reader towards creating the truth table, which follows in two easy steps. The outcome condition will be chosen first and then the conditions leading to the outcome are then clicked into the causal condition section. Clicking on the run button will bring up the truth table.

The truth table shown in Figure 25.4 shows the causal conditions, the number of the cases with the combination, and the outcome condition as well as consistency values. For example, let's take the first row with 3 cases or 25 per cent covered by the joint set of *gdpf* and *inqf* and the empty cell for outcome and 0.95 for consistency. The truth table represents 2^k rows (where k represents

gdpf	inqf	manf	unf	number	weakcv	consist	pre	product
1	1	0	0	3 (25%)		0.950000	0.909091	0.863636
1	0	0	1	2 (41%)		0.736842	0.523810	0.385965
1	0	1	1	2 (58%)		0.666667	0.333333	0.222222
0	1	0	1	1 (66%)		0.764706	0.529412	0.404844
0	1	1	1	1 (75%)		0.812500	0.571429	0.464286
1	0	0	0	1 (83%)		0.928571	0.833333	0.773809
1	1	0	1	1 (91%)		0.789474	0.600000	0.473684
1	1	1	1	1 (100%)		0.722222	0.411765	0.297396
0	0	0	0	0 (100%)		0.909091	0.714286	0.649351
0	0	0	1	0 (100%)		0.733333	0.428571	0.314286
0	0	1	0	0 (100%)		0.916667	0.714286	0.654762
0	0	1	1	0 (100%)		0.785714	0.454546	0.357143
n	1	n	n	n (100%)		0.928571	0.818182	0.759740

Figure 25.4 Truth table

the number of causal conditions), which is a reflection of all possible combinations of causal conditions.

The outcome condition *weakcv* is blank and it is up to the researcher to determine the outcome for each configuration. Consistency values are shown in column *consist* and show the degree to which membership in that corner of the vector space is a consistent subset of the membership in the outcome (Ragin, 2008b, p. 77) after applying the frequency threshold of 1 to the data and reducing the table by the configuration that does not have any observations. The consistency threshold of 0.9 is selected and 1 is placed in the *weakcv* (outcome) column for configurations with 0.95 consistency and greater and 0 for cases with lower consistency (see Figure 25.5).

After constructing the truth table the researcher can then select 'Standard Analyses' and this leads to the provision of the complex, intermediate and parsimonious solutions. These are the logical remainders of the solution. Using the Specify analysis will lead to different outputs. The standard analysis is preferred however. Figure 25.6 shows the output for the standard analyses.

According to Ragin (2008b), the solution is here that weak class voting is a product

of the high membership in the set of affluent countries and weak membership in strong unions.

FsQCA offers as well the possibility to show descriptive statistics, frequency analysis and cross-tab results. Figure 25.7 shows the result for the fsQCA outcome of weak class voting shown as descriptive stats.

CONCLUSION

The explanation, presentation and discussion of fsQCA for management and business research offers a tool which benefits this field of research to generate qualitative results and transfer these into rigorous quantitative findings. This chapter emphasises the relevance of this methodology and shows its applicability to real-life problems in a complex field such as business and management. The chapter review therefore provides an insightful overview regarding the use of fsQCA. We hope that business and management scholars will follow up on the opportunities offered by this methodology. A good starting point is the literature offered by Ragin and colleagues in terms of empirical application, and the software offered as a

gdpf	incf	manf	unif	number	weakcv	consist	pre	product
1	1	0	0	3	1	0.950000	0.909091	0.863636
1	0	0	0	1	1	0.928571	0.833333	0.773809
0	1	1	1	1	0	0.812500	0.571429	0.464286
1	1	0	1	1	0	0.789474	0.600000	0.473684
0	1	0	1	1	0	0.764706	0.529412	0.404844
1	0	0	1	2	0	0.736842	0.523810	0.385965
1	1	1	1	1	0	0.722222	0.411765	0.297386
1	0	1	1	2	0	0.666667	0.333333	0.222222

Figure 25.5 Truth table



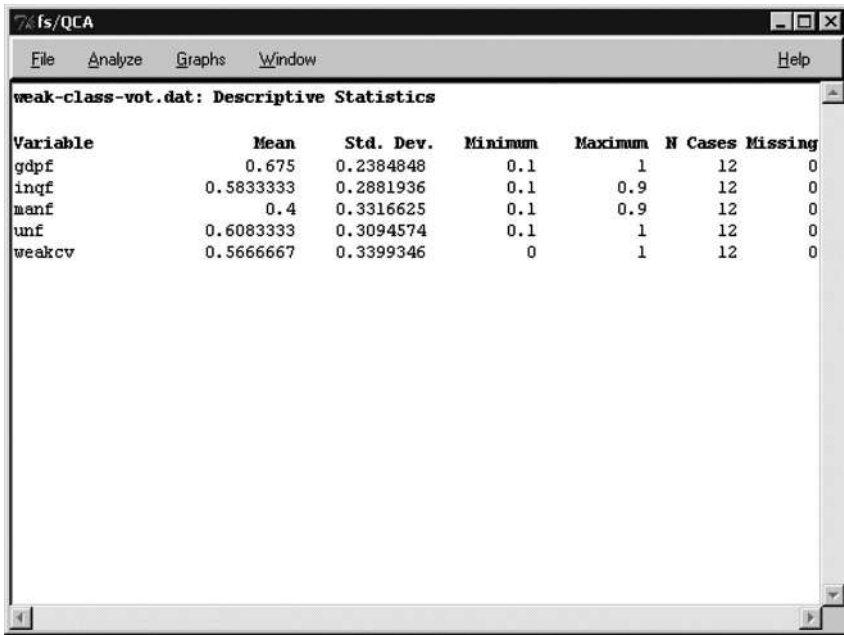
Figure 25.6 Truth table analysis

free download at the University of Arizona, will prove invaluable.

This chapter highlights the possibility for researchers to see their qualitative results transferred into a quantitative framework. This allows the findings to be communicated differently, which will be appealing to quantitatively trained audiences. Organisational business questions are looking into asymmetrical relationships which coincide with real-life applications and the strength of fsQCA to provide answers in that respect. Regression analysis results, which have been used so far in management research and provide a symmetric solution to asymmetrical problems, can now be complemented with fsQCA findings.

The practical example in this chapter follows a step-by-step approach from data collection, calibration, truth table analysis to the necessary and sufficient conditions of the outcome. The researcher can also add descriptive statistics, which enable qualitative data to be shown in an equivalent manner to quantitative results.

This chapter argues that fsQCA offers qualitative research a tool which gives rigorous insights into problems, which considers the classification and analysis of actions and behaviour as well as the provision of equifinal solutions where many paths can lead to an outcome. The in-depth analysis of case-oriented research combined with rigour benefits the research questions of managerial phenomena.



The screenshot shows a software window titled 'fs/QCA' with a menu bar containing 'File', 'Analyze', 'Graphs', 'Window', and 'Help'. The main content area displays 'weak-class-vot.dat: Descriptive Statistics' with a table of statistical data for five variables: gdpf, incf, manf, unf, and weakcv. The table includes columns for Variable, Mean, Std. Dev., Minimum, Maximum, N, and Cases Missing.

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum	N	Cases Missing
gdpf	0.675	0.2384848	0.1	1	12	0
incf	0.5833333	0.2881936	0.1	0.9	12	0
manf	0.4	0.3316625	0.1	0.9	12	0
unf	0.6083333	0.3094574	0.1	1	12	0
weakcv	0.5666667	0.3399346	0	1	12	0

Figure 25.7 Descriptive statistics

REFERENCES

- Alber, Jens (1995), 'A framework for the comparative study of social services', *Journal of European Social Policy*, 5(2), 131–49.
- Berg-Schlosser, Gisèle De Meur, Benoît Rihoux, and Charles C. Ragin (2009), 'Qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) as an approach', in *Configurational Comparative Methods. Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and Related Techniques*, Benoît Rihoux and Charles C. Ragin (Eds.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1–18.
- Crilly, Donal (2011), 'Predicting stakeholder orientation in the multinational enterprise: A mid-range theory', *Journal of International Business Studies*, 42(5), 694–717.
- Fan, Di, Lin Cui, Yi Li, and Cherrie J. Zhu (2016), 'Localized learning by emerging multinational enterprises in developed host countries: A fuzzy-set analysis of Chinese foreign direct investment in Australia', *International Business Review*, 25(1A), 187–203.
- Fiss, Peer C. (2007), 'A set-theoretic approach to organizational configurations', *Academy of Management Review*, 32(4), 1180–98.
- Goguen, Joseph Amadee. (1969), 'The logic of inexact concepts', *Synthese*, 19(3–4), 325–73.
- Greckhamer, Thomas (2011), 'Cross-cultural differences in compensation level and inequality across occupations: A set-theoretic analysis', *Organization Studies*, 32(1), 85–115.
- López-Duarte, Cristina, Marta M. Vidal-Suárez, and Belén González-Díaz (2015), 'Impact of cultural positions on FDI's entry mode', *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, 22(3), 509–26.
- Marchi, Gianluca, Marina Vignola, Gisella Facchinetti, and Giovanni Mastroleo (2014), 'International market selection for small firms: A fuzzy-based decision process', *European Journal of Marketing*, 48(11–12), 2198–212.
- Ragin, Charles C. (1987), *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press.
- Ragin, Charles C. (1994), *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*.

- Thousand Oaks, CA; London; New Delhi: Pine Forge Press.
- Ragin, Charles C. (2000), *Fuzzy-Set Social Science*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.
- Ragin, Charles C. (2008a), *Redesigning Social Inquiry: Fuzzy Sets and Beyond*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Ragin, Charles C. (2008b), *User's Guide to Fuzzy-Set/Qualitative Comparative Analysis*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona.
- Ragin, Charles C. (2014), *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Ragin, Charles C. and Lisa M. Amoroso (2011), *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ragin, Charles C. and Howard Saul Becker (1992), *What is a Case?: Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Rihoux, Benoît (2006), 'Qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) and related systematic comparative methods: Recent advances and remaining challenges for social science research', *International Sociology*, 21(5), 679–706.
- Rihoux, Benoît and Charles C. Ragin (2009), *Configurational Comparative Methods: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and Related Techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Roig-Tierno, Norat, Kun-Huang Huarng, and Domingo Ribeiro-Soriano (2016), 'Qualitative comparative analysis: Crisp and fuzzy sets in business and management', *Journal of Business Research*, 69(4), 1261–4.
- Seny Kan, Anderson Konan, Emmanuel Adegbite, Sami El Omari, and Mahamat Abdellatif (2016), 'On the use of qualitative comparative analysis in management', *Journal of Business Research*, 69(4), 1458–63.
- Sinkovics, Rudolf R. and Eva Alfoldi (2012), 'Progressive focusing and trustworthiness in qualitative research', *Management International Review*, 52(6), 817–45.
- Stokke, Olav Schram (2007), 'Qualitative comparative analysis, shaming, and international regime effectiveness', *Journal of Business Research*, 60(5), 501–11.
- Zadeh, Lotfi A. (1965), 'Fuzzy sets', *Information and Control*, 8(3), 338–53.
- Zimmermann, Hans-Juergen. (2010), 'Fuzzy set theory', *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Computational Statistics*, 2(3), 317–32.

ANTI-History: An Alternative Approach to History

Gabrielle Durepos and Albert J. Mills

INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers a theoretical description of six facets of ANTi-History. Each is illustrated by empirical examples of published work where ANTi-History is in use. ANTi-History is an alternative *critical* historiography that was initially developed by Gabrielle Durepos and Albert Mills in 2008 (Durepos, 2009; Durepos & Mills, 2012a, 2012b; Mills & Durepos, 2010). ANTi-History is a multifaceted approach to the study of history. Its critical potential lies in its focus on destabilizing the very notion of history as a dominant account of the past: to that extent ANTi-History is *anti* history. However, this does not mean a rejection of history as accounts of the past, but rather a rejection of the idea of the past as knowable through history (Munslow, 2010). Instead, ANTi-History is interested in how history as *knowledge of the past* is produced; it is interested in how human and non-human actors come to perform, and in the process,

produce histories. In this vein, ANTi-History speaks to the time before a given history is produced (in that sense it is *ante* history). Drawing on Actor-Network Theory, or ANT (Latour, 2005), it seeks to understand the relationships through which histories are produced – thus ANTi-History.

ANTi-History was developed against a growing discontentment with positivism in management and organization studies and its ahistorical character (Burrell & Morgan, 1979); disenchantment with capitalism and Soviet communism and their respective grand narratives of American exceptionalism and dialectical materialism; a developing interest in poststructuralism (including Foucauldian new historicism), cultural theory and sociology of knowledge accounts of *knowledge* (including ANT); the development and fusion of a number of critical communities (including feminists, Marxists, poststructuralists, etc.) that manifest itself as Critical Management Studies in Management and Organization Studies (MOS); and

a burgeoning call for more history in MOS (Booth & Rowlinson, 2006). While ANTi-History was developed in large part to answer that call in MOS, its multidisciplinary roots in for example, the sociology of knowledge (Mannheim, 1985); postmodern historiography/cultural theory (Foucault, 1982) and ANT (Latour, 1999a) means that it has applicability for historical work in any academic field.

As noted, ANTi-History is *ANTI*-History in that it draws on ANT to inform the method for doing history. But ANTi-History goes beyond ANT in that ANTi-History critiques ANT's lack of explicit attention to history (Durepos & Mills, 2012a). To make ANTi-History, we explicitly drew out of ANT its potential to address history. This has consequences for the style of writing history when using ANTi-History, examples of which are discussed below. The alternative style of writing is evident in ANTi-History in that it is an approach to undertaking organizational histories, and it is also a contribution to our understanding of how history is written or performed by actors. It suggests a hyper reflexive, and hyper transparent approach to history. What this means is that it encourages writing in, as part of the narrative itself, the social and political tactics of respective actors to describe not only *what* is the narrative but also *how* that narrative came to be. Seamless narratives written from a third-person voice that hide their politics of construction are discouraged. Instead, the actors' and writers' social and political tactics, which eventually lead to a particular narrative composition, are written in the narrative. With ANTi-History, the *what* and *how* of history are important but even more so is their *relationship*. A central focus of ANTi-History is the relationship between the social and political tactics of actors (the *how*) as well as the specific process through which this translates into a particular history (the *what*). The intent is to trace this process.

To date, ANTi-History has been used to do empirical work in a number of MOS

contexts, including analyses of the development of a history of Pan American Airways (Durepos & Mills, 2012a); debates around the representation of Weber's ideas (Durepos et al., 2012; Mills et al., 2014); the making of the history of the Academy of Management (Myrick et al., 2013); the development of critical management studies in Atlantic Canada (Bettin et al., 2016); multiple histories of a CEO succession in Air Canada (Hart et al., 2014) and analysis of the way municipal budgeting literally acts to perform a community as history (Corrigan, 2016). Attempts to theorize ANTi-History include Durepos and Mills, 2012b; Bryman et al., 2011 and Durepos, 2015. These theorizations and applications offer various insights and challenges for ANTi-History.

The chapter layout and our explanation of ANTi-History proceed in six parts. First, we theorize the meaning of the past-as-history. Second, we illustrate how to view the past-as-history through actor-networks. Third, we outline the notion of relational histories. Fourth, we probe the ontological potential of history by theorizing history as performance. Fifth, the concept of multiple histories is unpacked and finally, we explore the idea of ontological politics. Each part features a theoretical description of the ANTi-History facet followed by examples of empirical work where ANTi-History is in use. A summary of how ANTi-History is invoked in each empirical example is provided in Table 26.1.

THEORIZING THE PAST-AS-HISTORY

ANTI-History draws on postmodern historiography as a point of departure in theorizing notions of the past and history. Postmodern historians have made a significant effort to both define the past and history but also emphasize the need for their distinctiveness (Jenkins, 1991). A fundamental assumption of both postmodernism and ANTi-History is that the past is ontologically absent (Jenkins, 1991)

Table 26.1 Summary of empirical examples that use ANTI-History

<i>Example</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Data</i>	<i>Analysis</i>
Studies that use ANTI-History	The methods used	Types of data generated / analysed	How the data was analysed What the data reveals about the respective ANTI-History facet
Foster et al., 2014	Textual analysis	Select US textbooks published between 1933 and 1949 Formative management journals including <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> and the <i>Academy of Management Journal</i>	<i>ANTI-History facet demonstrated: the past-as-history as History</i> The authors demonstrate that in the inevitable process of selecting aspects of the past (e.g. The Human Relations School) to the exclusion of other aspects (e.g. The New Deal) there is a tendency to (i) conflate the past and history, e.g. what happened in the past <i>is</i> history; (ii) rely history as History, e.g. an account of the past (history) is legitimized through an almost metaphysical association with History as a means of determining the past; and (iii) blackbox the account as <i>the</i> history of the past, e.g. serving to marginalize or ignore other accounts (e.g. the importance of the New Deal for Management and Organization Studies). The textbooks are read to determine what version of the past of MOS is celebrated. The early publications in formative journals are analysed to show the emergence of the field and how it was being shaped. By placing the narrative of the textbooks and formative management journals in their socio-political context of creation, the authors are able to surface a competing narrative and how certain actors (New Deal) were marginalized through silencing. The authors show that what happened in the past is different from the history written about the past. They demonstrate that histories are written outcomes of their social and political contexts but conceal those, as they become uncontested histories.
Durepos et al., 2008	Archival research at the Otto Richter Library, University of Miami Textual analysis of published histories of Pan American Airways (PAA)	Letters and correspondence between actors Internal company newsletters Company memos Published histories of PAA Book reviews of published histories of PAA	<i>ANTI-History facet demonstrated: the past-as-history</i> A detailed archival review of documents at the University of Miami's 'Pan American World Airways collection' revealed that several traces of the company's history were actively suppressed by those, including the CEO Juan Trippe, who wanted to tell a heroic story centred on the leadership of Trippe. It was found that the airline's senior management set out to commission a particular history of the airline and in the process dissuaded a number of credible historians. They did manage to hire an aviation writer to undertake a number of interviews and gather relevant materials for a specific history of Juan Trippe's leadership, but it was left to fiction writer Robert Daley (1980) to write the particular narrative account of the company's past.

(Continued)

Table 26.1 Summary of empirical examples that use ANTi-History (Continued)

Example	Method	Data	Analysis
Myrick et al., 2013	Archival research at the Martin P. Catherwood Library at Cornell University Textual analysis of existing histories of AOM	Early AOM conference proceedings AOM organizational planning documents AOM meeting minutes AOM conference day programme AOM member roster Letters and correspondence between actors Documented memories of early AOM actors Existing official histories of AOM	<i>ANTi-History facet demonstrated: the past-as-history as actor-networks</i> The documents were analysed to assess <i>how</i> each important claim from the past (actor) came to take part in legitimating an official AOM historical (network) account. For example, the claim of AOM of having an unbroken 'history' going back to 1936 was examined by assessing the interests and actions of the actors involved in constructing the past as an official history (punctuated network). The process entailed looking for claims that supported an unbroken history, factors that raised doubts about such an account, and explanations of why the unbroken accounts were accepted over other accounts. Where possible, the authors tried 'to follow the actors in the production of the AOM but also in the production of histories of the AOM and the relationship between the two'. The process was iterative as the authors tried to both 'unravel the actors from their embedded histories while treating history itself as a key actor in the process. (Myrick et al., 2013, p. 349)
Durepos et al., 2012	Relational textual analysis which focuses on: 1) The politics of actors that influenced the construction of a text; 2) The relationship between texts; 3) The relationship between authors of texts; 4) How widely various texts disperse and forge relations with other authors or texts.	Various English translations of Max Weber's work between 1927 and 1968 Popular MOS texts where Weber's work is explored MOS articles that claim Weber's work has been misunderstood	<i>ANTi-History facet demonstrated: relationalism</i> The authors looked at the (politics of actors involved in the) construction and dispersion of Weber's work as it was linguistically translated to English. The focus was on tracing the various relations that bound the actors involved in translating Weber's work to assess, as much as possible, the types of influence they had on the outcome of the work. Different versions of Weber's work were surfaced and each were described as relational outcomes (thus, tied to) their socio-politics of construction. The authors suggest that various versions of Weber's scholarship are 'produced through series of relations or translations' where translations refer to actors capturing the interest of others and 'translating' their will to match that of their own (Durepos et al., 2012, p. 271)
Corrigan, 2016	Archival research at the Nova Scotia Archives Observation at Africville Museum Textual analysis Semiotic analysis	Formal agendas from Halifax Council meetings Official archived minutes from the Clerk's Office Halifax Budget documents Historical information about Africville Exhibit materials from the Africville Museum Media reports	<i>ANTi-History facet demonstrated: ontological potential of history & ontological politics</i> Corrigan shows that budget making is about the interpretation of accounting reports and numbers. He demonstrates the storytelling capacity of budget making. Three competing (but nested) (hi)stories emerge from the various budgets. These include: historical neglect, historical aggression and historical romance. Reading the Municipality budgets and surfacing three histories with respective to rationalities offers three competing ways of seeing Africville. They are not simply three different stories (plural types of knowledge) of the past. Instead, these are <i>multiple</i> versions of the past <i>performed</i> as history through the budget. The budgets perform three different versions of the past-as-history. In so far as the three histories compete with one another, we can see them as subject to <i>politics</i> . The three stories offer an example of <i>ontological politics</i> because they offer multiple and competing ways of seeing the past as history.

Hartt et al., 2014	Archival research at the Aviation and Space Museum and the Library and Archives of Canada Thematic analysis of text	Published histories of Air Canada Over 20,000 pages of Air Canada airline records from the archives including: - Memos for airline management - News clippings from national, regional and local press - Government memos and letters - Meeting minutes of senior management and the Board of the Airline - Reports to the Minister of Transport - Correspondence to and from the Minister of Transport and members of the Liberal Party Federation - Board of Governor reports - Internal memos - House of Assembly papers - Annual reports - Site maintenance reports - Correspondence between actors - Internal and external newsletters - Personal diaries - Provincial Museum Acts - Photos - Official opening programs - Curatorial reports - Museum attendance reports - Applications for labour union certification - Vandalism reports - Files on historic houses	<i>ANTI-History facet demonstrated: multiplicity</i> By analysing the archival materials and the various published histories of Air Canada, the authors reassemble three narrative histories of a key event at Air Canada in 1968, the controversial appointment of Yves Pratte as CEO. A close thematic analysis of the archival materials allows the researchers to surface 'how different networks operating within the airline contributed to how certain events in that time frame came to be understood and influenced', the construction of particular versions of the past-as-history (Hartt, et al., 2014, p. 289). As an outcome, we are left with three different versions of the past constructed as histories. Far from being independent of each other, the histories are related in that they compete but also support one another.
Durepos (in progress)	Archival research at the Nova Scotia Archive and the Nova Scotia Museum Web and media searches Interviews Non-participant observation	Board of Governor reports Internal memos House of Assembly papers Annual reports Site maintenance reports Correspondence between actors Internal and external newsletters Personal diaries Provincial Museum Acts Photos Official opening programs Curatorial reports Museum attendance reports Applications for labour union certification Vandalism reports Files on historic houses	<i>ANTI-History facet demonstrated: multiplicity</i> The goal of this research is to construct a(n) (organizational) history of the Nova Scotia Museum that features how the Museum has, over time, performed the past of the province (of Nova Scotia) as history. The various performances of the past of the province lead to <i>different</i> versions of the past-as-history, thus multiple histories (not different independent histories). To show how the museum has performed multiple versions of the past of the province, the researcher followed actors around, in and out of the archive, through various interviews, in media reports and also through days of non-participant observation.

but traces (actors) of the past are continuously *related* to other traces to form history (networks made of related actors).

The past is often described as all that has happened before now (Jenkins, 1991). It exists as a ‘permanent dimension of the human consciousness’ (Hobsbawm, 1997, p. 10). Postmodern historians do not contest that the past happened but do contest that the sum of its moments amounts to history itself (Jenkins, 1991). ANTi-History is mostly aligned with postmodern notions of the past. Both view the past as an absent present. But ANTi-History moves beyond a cognitive level of analysis where the past is assumed to exist as a dimension of human consciousness, and as a craft strictly reserved for historians (to one that is *relational* as explained below).

Postmodern scholars are united in their claim that history does not exist in an ontological realist mode, but is instead *knowledge of the past* (Jenkins, 1991). This stands in contrast to realist historians who, in general, believe in the existence of the past and history independent of our mental appreciation of them (Durepos, 2015). Based on this assumption, realist historians have sought to create histories that mirror the past as it happened. Realist historians aspire to singular and truthful histories, where history is an exact and real(ist) replica of the past. For postmodern and ANTi-History scholars, the past and history are necessarily dissonant. This is because the emancipatory potential of history lies in the many ways we can assemble traces of the past-as-history. Though postmodern historians have emphasized divorcing the past and history, historians like Munslow (2010) argue that the craft of history involves a moment where the past *becomes related* as history. As a result, though the past and history might be dissimilar, they can never be separated as one invokes the other. Munslow (2010) emphasizes this idea textually in the *past-as-history* to remind us of their distinctiveness (history does not represent the past) but also that one will necessarily and always invoke the other. This textual depiction reminds us

to emphasize their continual relation, and it is the *composition of this relation* with which ANTi-History is concerned.

Let’s take the example of the importance of the Human Relations School in the development of MOS. It is commonly held that while Taylorism and the Scientific Management School were the forbearers of MOS and the relationship between task design and efficiency, the Human Relations School introduced the ‘human factor’ into the developing field (Wren, 1972). So pervasive is this idea that even feminist accounts of the role of Mary Parker Follett have referred to her as an early adherent of Human Relations (Graham, 1996). Yet, this oft-repeated history of the field relies on a number of subjective choices. By starting with Taylor, the field is defined as focused on for-profit organizations and the drive for efficiency. It may have been a different matter if histories of the field had started with the work of Robert Owen and the notion of cooperative production. The idea of ‘schools’ of management thought is another imposition on the narrative of field development (Koontz, 1962). A third imposition is the choice of Human Relations as succeeding Scientific Management practice. This is a curious choice that ignores the role of President Roosevelt’s New Deal policies that put millions of workers to work in a relatively short period of time compared with the Human Relations experiments at the Hawthorne works, with its 30,000 employees – many of whom were laid off during the New Deal era. Indeed, arguably the idea of Human Relations as a coherent school of thought did not develop until well after the World War II and was retrospectively imposed on events in the 1930s (Foster et al., 2014; Mills et al., 2015a). Finally, the choice of these, and subsequent schools of MOS, was premised on a USA-centric account of the field that largely ignored events and scholarship in other parts of the globe (Witzel, 2012). The question from an ANTi-History perspective would not be whether these accounts were accurate and true, but rather who is telling the story

and what are the resulting implications for the field.

As shown, ANTi-History draws on post-modern historiography but it also departs from it in a number of ways. First, ANTi-History moves away from conceptualizing the past and history as a cognitive product. For example, Jenkins (1991) describes history as an interpretation of the past made present in and by the contemporary *mind*. Thus, the history is an outcome of an historian and his/her cognitive labour in collecting and interpreting documents, followed by writing up the analysis. For ANTi-History, however, history is an outcome of the socio-politics of different conglomerations of actors (human, non-human and non-corporeal) as they transform *a sense* of the past. An example of this approach is the study of the socio-politics of Robert Daley's (1980) history of Pan American Airways, which arose out of the concerns of the airline's senior management to commission a (specific) history of the company that would focus on the leaders' exploits (Durepos et al., 2008). Second, ANTi-History moves beyond the postmodern epistemological description of history as *knowledge of the past*, to probe the ontological potential of history (as discussed below). Third, ANTi-History not only features what happened in the past but also includes the *process* and *practices* in which the past was transformed as history as part of the narrative. ANT helps us fulfil these three distinguishing points about ANTi-History (Law & Hassard, 1999).

THE PAST-AS-HISTORY AS ACTOR-NETWORKS

The second facet of ANTi-History entails defining the past-as-history through interlaced actor-networks. The past-as-history is both constructed and enacted through the practice of actors that form networks and networks that oscillate as actors (Durepos,

2015). Actor-networks are not a metaphor to understand the past-as-history, but are what comes to constitute the past-as-history, itself. We unpack this by drawing on ANT.

With ANT, actors and networks are not essentialist entities that exist out there, that a researcher simply collects and documents. Rather, the actor-network itself is the 'frame' (Calás & Smircich, 1999, p. 663). As with ANT, actors in ANTi-History are theorized as heterogeneous. *Actors* are human, including oral history interviewees, research assistants and heritage interpreters. Actors are also non-human such as archival documents, diaries and board of governor reports (Law & Mol, 1995). *Networks* (of the actor-network) are past traces ordered into a coherent narrative. Actor-networks are the *means* through which the social world is built. Actor-networks are also the building blocks of the past-as-history. ANTi-History uses actor-networks as the conceptual *frame* for reassembling the past-as-history.

The notions of the actor, the network and the hyphen that connects them are central to ANT and also ANTi-History. We focus on the actor and network for now. Callon (1986) explains that to realize their goals, actors capture the interests of others, translate their will and enrol them into their cause. In doing this, actors form networks. Sometimes, the interests of actors in the network become so aligned that actors can be understood to act as one. For example, the actions and message actors convey to realize an objective is so uniform that it conceals the 'collective' on which it stands (Latour, 1999b, p. 310). In this sense, a network can be understood to have oscillated as an actor, one that has become blackboxed (Law & Hassard, 1999). A detailed focus on any actor reveals the composition of a network on which it has come to stand. Thus, actors (*en masse*) not only form networks but also are understood as networks themselves. The task of ANT is to *trace the topography*, thus how actors assume an order into a network and how networks become actors that are eventually nested into other networks.

Seeing the past and history as actor-networks allows us to trace actor politics and composition. With ANTi-History, actor-networks (with the hyphen) and their topographies are the building blocks of the past-as-history. A study of the history of the Academy of Management (AOM) provides an example. The AOM has far-reaching influence within academia. For many scholars worldwide, a paper accepted for presentation at the AOM is likely to be seen as prestigious by one's peers and, importantly, one's Dean. While there is no doubting the *current* influence of the association, an interesting ANTi-History question is how the influence is/was achieved? Two factors stand out from the AOM's own sensemaking of its importance – size and history: 'Founded in 1936, our global community today is nearly 20,000 strong, spanning 120 countries' (aom.org/about/). The AOM website goes on to make much of its history, including its archives, fellows and presidents. In recent years, the AOM has made much of the length of time it has been in existence. Proclaiming an unbroken existence going back to 1936, the 2011 Presidential address celebrated the AOM's 75th year and a 2015 commemorative pin was minted to celebrate the '75th Annual Meeting'.

An ANTi-History study of the AOM by Myrick et al. (2013) set out to understand what is its claimed history, how the history was produced and whether there were alternative readings of events. Myrick et al. (2013) found a number of factors that had to be negotiated to arrive at an unbroken history of the AOM from 1936 onwards. These included debates around what constituted a 'founder', the purpose of the association and an interpretation of a period of inactivity from 1941 to 1947. In 1936 Charles Jamison and William Mitchell held a dinner meeting to discuss the establishment of an 'association of management teachers' (Myrick et al., 2013, p. 7). They managed to enrol (for example, recruit actors to a unifying viewpoint) eight other business scholars that year, fifteen

others in 1937 and nineteen to the 1938 dinner meeting. Apart from Jamison, only two others attended all three meetings. The 1938 dinner meeting was designated as the 'Third Annual Conference of the Academy of Management', but it wasn't until 1940 that the meeting adopted a formal constitution and name, with a new purpose developed by Ralph Davis – to foster 'a philosophy of management' to aid the socio-economic aims of industrial society (Myrick et al., 2013, p. 11). In other words, while Jamison and Mitchell did much to enrol members to their idea of an association of management teachers, Davis translated the purpose into a supportive ideological philosophy for capitalism. In 1941 Robert Brecht took the leadership role in the AOM, but with the USA entry into World War II, the association became totally inactive, with no apparent effort to keep it going even in name. In 1947 Ralph Davis and others made an attempt to, what they called, revive the association and a conference was held later that year. In the ensuing debate about the character of the association there was conflicting opinion as to whether it was being restarted, resurrected or reinvented. In the end, Ralph Davis prevailed in translating the event into the 'Renaissance' conference. In subsequent years the idea of an association that was continuously in operation since 1936 was developed through, among other things, a retrospective assignment of names and terms of office to selected individuals, including Jamison (1936–40), Brecht (1941–7) and Davis (1948), etc. Through this process the idea of an unbroken association dating back to 1936 was blackboxed (for example, fixed as true or real), with all the gaps and the socio-political processes involved hidden from view. This long 'history' may not be of any consequence now, with AOM having such a large membership and prestige. But it may have been an important enrolment process for much of the early years post 1947 when the AOM had little more than 100 members until the 1960s. Myrick et al. (2013, p. 345) show that history

'is an important part of the legitimization process whereby an organization comes to be seen as important and its activities validated by the sheer passage of time'.

TOWARDS RELATIONAL HISTORIES

How do we map actor-networks? To do so, we need to unpack the third facet of ANTi-History, namely *relationalism*. Relationalism in ANTi-History means placing emphasis on the *relations* that bound traces of the past. It implies tracing the associations or connections that come to form a particular history as opposed to taking for granted actor-networks or histories as pre-given and stable. ANTi-History calls for disturbing taken for granted and thus, established history. Unlike modernist approaches to history (Mills & Helms Mills, this Handbook), ANTi-Historians do not view history as stable, fixed, assembled and complete. Instead, they ask how histories are produced and performed through a series of relations over time. With ANTi-History, we foreground actor' trails, thus how they are associated (Latour, 1986). We suggest tracing the link between actors in a way that reveals their trajectory through time. Through mapping, ANTi-History emphasizes how actors are altered at each point in the trajectory. To do ANTi-History, we suggest tracing chains of actor associations (Latour, 1986). Tracing relations is not simply a method of studying actor-network movement across time. It is a way of telling stories of how the past becomes history (Law & Mol, 1995).

Central to the focus on actor-networks is the hyphen (Latour, 2005), which stresses the notion of *oscillation* and *becoming*. For Latour (2005), the social is made of actors that *become* networks and networks that *become* actors. Like ANT, of importance in doing ANTi-History is what happens at the site of the *hyphen*. ANTi-History shifts the researcher's gaze from stable states (the past or history) to the site where traces of the past

(actors) *become* history (a network whose topography engenders a version of the past). The focus is also on how the history/network takes its place as part of the past and becomes an actor. This process is one of *becoming* and *ordering* (Law, 1994). Past actors *become* ordered in a network and networks (made from traces from the past) *become* actors.

Tracing associations involves looking at actors, but specifically their *encounters*. The encounter is where relations are either forged or missed. Forged relations bind actors and, collections of actors form networks. In ANT, networks assume their status as such once they are able to hold particular actor formations intact, either temporarily or long lasting (Latour, 1999b). Of interest is how these actors/traces of the past formulate a version of the past-as-history and do so by virtue of their placement in the network, the relations they forge and the meaning assumed through these relations. Mapping the placement of past actors by outlining their relation to one another assumes importance because after all, actors or past traces have no essential meaning in and of themselves. Instead, they assume their meaning in relation to other actors (Law & Mol, 1995). It is through these very *relations*, thus the position of an actor (a trace of the past) as one link in a network, that actor significance is established (Law, 1999). Though the past is viewed as absent, its traces assume individuated meanings through their location in a network. Of interest for Latour (1999b, p. 303) is the 'complex and controversial nature of what it is for an actor to come into existence'. Actors are defined by their trials (Latour, 1999b). Each encounter, whether it leads to a permanent or long-lasting relation, alters actor composition. Each connection makes a difference to both the shape of the actor and by virtue of this, the shape of the network in which the actor is involved (Latour, 1996). Tracing these differences and the resultant *composition* of actor-networks is the process through which the past becomes history.

The importance of German sociologist Max Weber's work for MOS provides an interesting example of relationalism. There is little doubt that Weber has an influence on MOS, but there is debate around what is that influence. Much of the debate takes Weber's importance as a given. It rarely challenges the oft-repeated characterization of him as 'the father of Organization Theory'. Apart from some issues of language translation, much discussion circulates around what Weber 'really' said and what he really meant – as if the issues can be resolved through reference to some underlying truth. Drawing on ANTi-History, Durepos et al. (2012) examine a series of relationships around the translation work (for example, both the interpretation of a foreign language and the imposition of meaning) of Talcott Parsons as he introduced Weber's work to US scholars. The resulting and subsequent texts produced a dominant view of Weber as a scholar in the structural-functionalist tradition that remained untested for several decades. Tracing the actors involved in this outcome, Durepos et al. (2012) trace Parsons through a series of relational points. These include being taught by R.H. Tawney at the London School of Economics and then by Karl Mannheim at the University of Heidelberg. The interactions with Mannheim led to an interest in Weber and connections to Marianne Weber, Max's widow, and agreement to allow the young and inexperienced Parsons to translate Weber's work. Tawney's initial connection with Parsons became more significant later when the publisher Allen & Unwin insisted on hiring a senior scholar to write the introduction and oversee the writing of Parsons' translation of a book on Weber. This latter process led to extensive edits by Tawney that influenced the meanings of the Weber text and helped to construct the particular structural-functionalist account for which Weber's work became known. Durepos et al. (2012) also went on to trace how the Parsons-Tawney account came to have a retrospective influence of MOS in the late 1940s/early 1950s

as new generations conflated the period when Weber was writing (late 1800s/early 1900s) with his influence on the emerging field of management theory in the USA at a much later point in time.

In tracing the relations that allowed for Weber's work to be translated as history, we gain an insight into this actor-network composition. Doing ANTi-History means tracing relations that bound actors into a network formation. These relations crystallize and eventually become taken for granted. In short, doing ANTi-History means revealing the topography of actors and their relations. But these straightforward instructions have complex philosophical consequences in the realms of epistemology and ontology.

HISTORIES AS PERFORMANCE: PROBING THE ONTOLOGICAL POTENTIAL OF ANTI-HISTORY

Similar to postmodern historiography, doing ANTi-History means producing knowledge of the past by documenting past traces; this is an epistemological comment. But the move of ANTi-History away from the postmodern emphasis on text, knowledge and the realm of epistemology become most evident in its insistence on the ontological potential of history. With ANTi-History, history is not only *knowledge of the past* as assumed by postmodern historians (Jenkins, 1991). Instead, we propose in our explanation of the fourth facet of ANTi-History that history is what actors *perform* through their very acts to define it. The (absent) past is transformed into history in conventional actor *practices*. It is in these very practices that worldviews are built and shaped. In discussing history as performance, we enter the realm of ontology. ANTi-History meddles with the ontological potential of history.

To explore the ontological realm of history, we must continue our focus on relations. The relation that bounds actors and networks

is one of activity, movement and fluidity (Law, 2008). It is characterized by latency and potential (Latour, 1999a). At this site, the conditions of possibility for what an actor *can become* are open (Ermarth, 2007). There is potential for translation and transformation (Latour, 1999a). Most importantly, it is at this site that we are privy to actor activity and practice. To explore the ontological potential of history, we must focus on these practices and the ways of being that are enacted by virtue of them. Following Mol (2002, p. 152), we suggest a move away from 'understanding objects as the focus point of various perspectives to following them as they are enacted in a variety of practices'. The ontological realm of history exposes it as the outcome of practices as opposed to knowledge of the past. After all, even knowledge is produced in practice (Mol, 2002). The shift of focus from knowledge to practice will have consequences for how we approach history. To do history, we no longer first select a perspective and use it as the lens from which to view an object of interest. In the new course of action, we follow 'objects while they are being enacted in practice' (Mol, 2002, p. 152). To do history, we must foreground practice and the relations whereby traces of the past are bound.

But questions might arise as to what can be gained by following actors in practice. Again, why is tracing relations necessary to do history? To start, the past is performed or enacted as history in practice. It is in practice that relations are forged which bound actors into a particular network formation. It is through that network formation, through its very composition that the object of study (for example, the AOM) comes into being and its meaning established. In short, practice is the site of performance or enactment. Calás and Smircich (1999, p. 663) offer that practice 'constitutes and describes its object of interest'. Representations are not static but are articulations that help to make and remake the object they describe (Law, 2008). Representations of the past

articulate a version of history; they are cogent participants in its making (Law & Urry, 2004). Historical articulations produce the version of the past they describe. This is the ontological potential of history. As Law and Urry (2004, p. 397) note, we are no longer talking about 'different perspectives on a single reality', instead we are talking about 'the enactment of different realities'. Africville, an area of Halifax, the Nova Scotia capital, provides a uniquely interesting example:

After the American Revolution of 1775 and the War of 1812, Black Loyalists, who were escaped slaves, and free Blacks came to Nova Scotia to settle land. An oral history account by the Africville Heritage Trust (2014) suggests that some of these people settled in the north end of Halifax to be close to fishing opportunities in Halifax Harbour and to have a chance to find paid work. The area developed into a community, which eventually became known as Africville. (Corrigan, 2016, pp. 80–1)

Focusing on the budget making process of the Halifax Regional Municipality (Municipality) over time, Corrigan (2016) shows how budget making is not simply a matter of numbers and rational calculation but dramatic performances with history making propensities. He explores how various budgetary *performances* served to create different histories of Africville over time, including historical neglect, aggression and romance. To focus on the first of the three, one dominant history was performed through the Municipality's 'systematic neglect' of Africville in the allocation of resources. Such 'performances often call for responses to criticism and in the process stories are developed and histories enacted'. In this case the 'all-white administration declined to see budget discrimination as racism, preferring instead to see the overall "problem of Africville" ... [specifically] the problem of the colored people in Halifax' (p. 87). This history was reinforced when a subsequent council voted to tear down Africville as an eyesore and to relocate the inhabitants to

other areas of the region. This latter performance, through a focus of paternalist concern, nonetheless served to reinforce the idea of Africville as a problem of the ‘colored residents’.

In pursuing this type of reasoning, the question of whether you can ever *know* the past of a phenomenon loses reverence. What assumes relevance in the new line of reasoning becomes *identifying the practices where different versions of one past are enacted* (Mol, 2002). The exercise of mapping actor-networks now entails following them in practice. It entails tracing actors across their various practices to see which version of the past they perform as history and, why. What becomes crucial is mapping the way a version of history performs the past of an object. In following the practice of budget making over time, Corrigan (2016) traces different enactments of the past of Africville.

The focus on practice is noteworthy. If ‘practice becomes our entrance into the world, ontology is no longer a monist whole’ (Mol, 2002, p. 157). Instead, ontology has multiplied (Mol, 1999, 2002). If history is performed differently depending on the *set of practice* in which it is found, then (and as shown in the next section) history is not plural knowledge of the past but *multiple* enactments of it. To summarize, the past-as-history is performative. The performance varies based on the set of practice in which it is found. This means the past-as-history is necessarily multiple.

MULTIPLICITY IN HISTORY

Our aim with this fifth facet of ANTi-History is to show that history is not single or plural, but instead multiple (Mol, 1999).

With ANTi-History, we problematize historical accounts that are either described truthfully, written in an authoritative style or adopt a tone of certainty. These narratives lack reflexivity: no effort is made to

acknowledge how the historian has shaped the narrative. No consideration of alternative ways the past could be narrated as history is included in the narrative. Singular stories are, by virtue of their emplotment, absolute, thus deemed truth. Postmodern historians have critiqued history as truth by showing how different perspectives lead to plural histories. Though we are sympathetic to these critiques, we are also cognizant of the problem caused by plural history, which Mol (1999) calls *perspectivalism*.

Perspectivalism in history suggests that many historians focused on one phenomenon will construct different independent histories. Each historian is informed by his or her respective standpoint, professional and social background. The result is *mutually exclusive* histories, each an outcome of the perspective adopted by respective historians (Durepos, 2015). In viewing history from different standpoints, though on their own terms, each version is assumed equally plausible. None is contestable. Each is deemed *true* from its respective perspective. In existing alongside one another, though without interfering with one another, each may be considered *singularly* (Mol, 1999). Though perspectivalism fosters a break from singularity, it presents another type of *singular* truth which perhaps fosters more trouble than relief. For what it brings is not single truths but instead (and ironically), *plural-singular truths*.

This leads to another problem: because perspectivalism implies the production of different histories where each version is unrelated, no effort is made to trace the connections or *relations* between the different histories. The need to trace politics between different versions remains irrelevant. Questions such as *does one representation weaken or strengthen the other by contradicting or supporting it* are not asked or answered. But, without acknowledging the relationship between different versions of history, we have no grounds to assess their plausibility, thus the plural versions become relative. In

short, plural histories fall prey to relativism (Law, 2008).

In light of these problems, we suggest moving away from perspective and plurality, in favour of performance and multiplicity. Tracing multiplicity begins with foregrounding practice and documenting how the past of a phenomenon is performed as history in practice (Law, 2008). To trace multiplicity, we must search for the different *sets of practices* where the past of a phenomenon might be performed as history. Here is an example: one of the authors of this chapter (Durepos) is currently studying how a museum constructs and delivers history (she is also writing their organizational history). Her research has consisted of following actors such as heritage interpreters and museum administration. Specifically, she has looked at how the heritage interpreters perform the past of Canadian inshore fishing for elderly couples and children. She also viewed how the museum administration initially performed the past of inshore fishing as part of an application for museum funding. In each situation or set of practices (history of inshore fishing for an elderly couple, children and museum funding application), a different *version* of the past of inshore fishing was performed as history. In following the performance of inshore fishing across the three sets of practice, the result is not three different histories or three mutually exclusive, independent phenomena (plural histories), but *different versions of the same thing*. As Mol (1999) and others (Law, 1999) have noted, multiplicity is more than one but less than many. It is *more than one*, there are three different performances. The *version* of the past performed as history of inshore fishing changes based on the audience. For example, the (one) past of inshore fishing performed as history for the elderly couple, children and funding application *are different*. But it is *less than many*: there is only *one* past of the inshore fishing industry being performed. The heritage interpreters and museum administrators are each involved in performing the same past. It is

more than one version performed (as history) of the same past.

Our point in providing this example is that the past performed as history does not lead to different, independent histories. With this example, we show how history can *perform different versions of the past*. The past performed as history across practice (interpreting heritage for children, the elderly or the government) multiplies. With ANTi-History, history is the outcome of the *performance* of actor-networks in practice and following the actor-networks across their practices leads to *multiplicity*. We have moved away from the postmodern emphasis on perspective, epistemology and plurality. ANTi-History moves us towards performance, ontology and multiplicity.

Hartt et al. (2014) demonstrate multiplicity in a key event in the history of Air Canada. In 1968 Air Canada controversially appointed a new CEO, Yves Pratte. Pratte, a Montreal lawyer, was the first 'outsider' to head up the airline – the previous CEOs had all been recruited from among the company's pilots. A particular starting point for the controversy was that senior management had expected insider Herb Seagrim, Vice President of the company and the outgoing CEO's (Gordon McGregor) handpicked successor, to become the new CEO. The largely unionized membership had also expected that an insider, especially one that had worked their way up through the ranks, would be chosen. The Canadian Government of the day, however, had other ideas. The government was taking steps to enact a process of bilingualism throughout the public service and saw the retirement of McGregor as an ideal opportunity to appoint a Francophone to the position. These different sensemaking positions arguably served in the eventual construction of three histories of the event – one by senior management, one from a union perspective and other from the government (Hartt et al., 2014). All three histories are agreed about the event – the year (1968); who was in place at the time (McGregor), the possible successor (Seagrim) and the actual

appointee (Pratte). The histories differ, however, on what led up to the appointment; the context in which it occurred; the reasons for the selection of Pratte and/or rejection of Seagrim; and the eventual outcome (for example, improvements or otherwise in the airline's operation). In other words, there are multiple accounts of a single past.

ANTI-History sets out to *read* histories and accounts of those histories with an eye to the multiple telling of one event, person or phenomenon to understand how the past gets performed based on varying practices. This can include looking for the existence of varying, conflicting and/or silenced accounts (Decker, 2013). In examining the histories of Pan American Airways, for example, Durepos et al. (2008) found that major accounts were similar in their approach and at best appeared to offer different parts of the same overall narrative. This raised questions about how it was that at least three histories followed roughly the same major narratives, and what may have been left out of the accounts. A detailed archival review of documents at the University of Miami's 'Pan American World Airways collection' revealed that several traces of the company's history were actively suppressed by those, including the CEO himself (Juan Trippe), who wanted to tell a heroic story centred on the leadership of Trippe. Less suppressed than just plain ignored was the role of women in a narrative focused on men and machines. Archival research also surfaced the potential for other, postcolonial, tales, traces of which had been collected and documented from a colonial perspective (Hartt et al., 2012).

HISTORY AS MULTIPLE PERFORMANCES: ONTOLOGICAL POLITICS

The previous two facets of ANTi-History have focused on the ontological potential of history and multiplicity. Those discussions

have prompted us to ask the following: if there are different versions of the past performed as history, and these are different versions of reality, then the question becomes which version to perform? As Law (2008, p. 13) notes, how do the versions 'relate? How do we choose between them? How should we choose between them?' Furthermore, is the decision concerning which version to perform infused with politics? For example, are there 'additional political reasons for preferring and enacting one kind of reality rather than another' (Law, 2008, p. 13)? This leads to the sixth facet of ANTi-History. It combines the ideas of ontology with multiplicity into the notion of ontological politics (Mol, 1999, 2002). Ontological politics surfaces the politics in which actors engage to make decisions about *how* to perform the past-as-history or *which* version of the past should be performed as history. This is achieved by foregrounding the relations that exist between actors as they form networks. As noted above, an analytic focus on the hyphen linking actor-networks allows us to ask questions like: what happens in between, and how does the actor become a network? We offered that the site where actors of the past oscillate as history (network) is one where politics are enacted. Ontological politics concerns actor uses of small and large power tactics in making decisions about what might be 'made in the relations of investigation, what might be brought into being' (Law & Urry, 2004, p. 396). Thus with ontological politics, we ask what realities does history help to enact or erode? What realities of the past might history 'help to bring into being or strengthen' (Law & Urry, 2004, p. 396)? The critical potential of ANTi-History resides in its focus on tracing the politics of actors involved in the doing of history to surface the multiple versions of the past-as-history as well as those privileged and marginalized by them. ANTi-History traces actor struggles *over how to see* the past-as-history.

To return to the Africville example, Corrigan (2016) points to three prominent

histories, including, more recently, a romanticized story. In this ‘romance’ history attempts are made to move from the demeaning view of Africville to one that presents the community as idyllic – ‘not a slum at all, but instead an idyllic seaside community worth preserving’ (Corrigan, 2016, p. 91). A group seeking to preserve the history of the community developed this romanticized history through the use of exhibits and texts at the Africville museum. They also resorted to a legal case against the Municipality to compensate the former residents of Africville for having their idyllic community denigrated and destroyed.

SUMMARY AND NEW DIRECTIONS

ANTI-History was initially developed between 2005 and 2009 from a fusion of Gabrielle Durepos’ interest in the sociology of knowledge and actor-network theory, and Albert Mills’ interest in critical historiography. This fusion eventually became the focus of Durepos’ doctoral thesis (2009), and a subsequent co-authored book (Durepos & Mills, 2012b).

Descriptive accounts include Bryman, et al. (2011, chapter 21), who provide a detailed discussion of ANTi-History’s approach to ‘Historiography and the Past in Business Studies’; and Mills and Durepos’ (2010) encyclopedia overview. Recent theorizations include Durepos and Mills’ (2012a) comparative analysis of actor-network theory and ANTi-History in the development of critical historiography; and, more recently, Durepos’ (2015) theorization of amodern thinking in historical analyses. Reflective pieces include Mills et al.’s (2015b) analysis of how their collaboration creates specific knowledge and what we can learn from this; Weatherbee’s (2016) critical assessment of ANTi-History’s contribution to management and organizational history; and Suddaby’s (2016) review of ANTi-History as an emerging construct that offers potential to bridge

the gap between business history and management theory.

Several applied studies have appeared over the past few years, including examination of the production of a corporate history of Pan American Airways (Durepos et al., 2008); an analysis of the history of the AOM (Myrick et al., 2013); analysis of a key event in leadership succession at Air Canada (Hartt et al., 2014); a study of the reproduction of a scholarly conference association (MacNeil & Mills, 2015); analysis of debate around the writing and interpretation of Max Weber (Durepos et al., 2012; Mills et al., 2014); and exploration of the local development of Critical Management Studies in Eastern Canada (Bettin et al., 2016).

Certain developments in the application of ANTi-History are noteworthy, such as the use of archival research. In contrast to actor-network theory that has primarily used ethnographic methods for following actors, ANTi-History has involved archival research as well as textual searches. Table 26.2 lists the benefits and limitations of using respective methods with ANTi-History. Ethnography and archival research are not incompatible and, although time excessive, could provide a wealth of analysis if used in conjunction. There are recent studies that combine multiple methods to do ANTi-History. The first, as discussed above, is currently underway by Durepos and involves extensive collection and analysis of archived materials in the Nova Scotia Museum alongside a series of interviews with museum staff. The second is a recent study by Coller et al. (2016) who, in their study of the history of British Airways Archives, analyse archival materials to establish some of the names and stories around the development of the archives, undertake an analysis of the archives’ uses and operation (for example, sitting in staff training sessions on the airline’s history) and then undertake follow-up interviews with many of the people identified in the texts. A third study is by Hartt (2013) who has introduced the notion of the non-corporeal actant into ANTi-History

Table 26.2 Benefits and limitations of the methods used with ANTi-History

<i>Method</i>	<i>Benefits</i>	<i>Limitations</i>
Archival research Media and web searches	• Data generated is from the past, thus from the very context that it is intended to represent • Reveals a vast array of respective actors • Allows for following the actors across various documents to map how they are related into a network formation • Allows for following a large number of actors over a considerable period of time (e.g. PAA's archives cover the period 1927 to 1991; AOM's archives cover the period 1936 to the present)	• Documents can be difficult to interpret because they are removed from their temporal context of creation • Archive can have limited documents • Researchers can only follow the traces that have already been collected, selected and catalogued by the archive's administrators • Archive can conceal certain narratives and/or actors' documents which may have been deemed not important enough to include in the archive • Cannot access the motivations of actors who produced the document found in the archive • Time and effort intensive • Travel and accommodation can be costly if archive is not local
Textual / thematic analysis	• Allows for a close reading and contextualization of documents (from the archive or published histories) • Allows mapping of actors across various documents, books and published histories to assess dispersion • Texts analysed can cover a wide time span	• Can get access to actor motivations • Limited amount of text or information found might lead to an inadequate answer to a researcher's question
Interviews	• Gives the researcher access to actors' actions and motivations • Allows for discovery of new research leads and allows the researcher to probe	• Interviewees are subject to their memory, which can lead to forgetting dates or details of the event • Important actors can die before interview • Data generated is a <i>present centred</i> perception <i>about</i> the past but not necessarily from the past thus may not be deemed historical
Observation Non-participant observation	• Allows for following actors in practice and context • Allows for asking actors questions as they arise	• Potentially difficult to document actor motivations as the data generated is observed from the researchers' lens and not the actors' lens • Limited in the number of actors that can be followed • Limited time period over which actors can be followed

studies. Hartt argues that apart from human (for example, Charles Jamison) and non-human actors (for example, AOM conference meetings) we need to take into account non-corporeal actants (ideas, non-embodied and non-material influences) that are not directly related to any one person or thing. This notion has drawn attention to those intangible things that influence people and events in enrolling them in a particular actor-network. Fourth, the work of MacNeil and Mills (2015) has experimented with fusing archival research with qualitative social network analysis.

While the archival research was undertaken to identify a number of actors, the intent of the social network analysis was to map the large number of data points of the network under analysis viz. the Atlantic Schools of Business (a scholarly association).

We end on both a reflective and an ironic note. The future development of ANTi-History, although initially produced by Durepos and Mills, will depend on the processes of enrolment, translation and, yes, blackboxing by themselves *and* others. We already note some accounts of ANTi-History

that vary from what we intended. That is, after all, how research traditions proceed. Nonetheless, in keeping with the guidelines of the SAGE *Handbook* series, this chapter sought to provide a *clear* and *focused* articulation of what is ANTi-History (as we know and practise it today). We recognize the irony of the goal. This is due to the realist assumption that underlies it which is antithetical to ANTi-History. For example, underlying the goal of trying to clearly capture what is ANTi-History is an assumption that it exists outside our mental appreciation of it, and in a stable, capture-able format. It does not. We close by modifying this goal: in this chapter we aimed to provide a clear articulation of what is ANTi-History as a critical historiography that shifts and translates each time it is invoked.

REFERENCES

- Bettin, C., Mills, A. and Helms Mills, J. (2016) "'CMS, Canada & the Network: An Actor-Network Analysis', in C. Grey, I. Huault, V. Perret and L. Taskin (eds.), *CMS: Global Voices, Local Accent*. London: Routledge, pp. 36–53.
- Booth, C. and Rowlinson, M. (2006) 'Management and organizational history: Prospects', *Management & Organizational History*, 1(1): 5–30.
- Bryman, A., Bell, E., Mills, A. and Yue, A. (2011) *Business Research Methods*. 1st Cdn edn. Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.
- Burrell, G. and Morgan, G. (1979) *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis*. London: Heinemann.
- Calás, M. and Smircich, L. (1999) 'Past post-modernism? Reflections and tentative directions', *Academy of Management Review*, 24(4): 649–71.
- Callon, M. (1986) 'Some elements of a sociology of translation: Domestication of the scallops and the fisherman of St Brieuc Bay', in J. Law (ed.), *Power, Action and Belief: A New Sociology of Knowledge?* London: Routledge Kegan Paul, pp. 196–233.
- Coller, K., Helms Mills, J. and Mills, A. (2016) 'The British Airways heritage collection: An ethnographic "history"', *Business History*, 58(4): 547–70.
- Corrigan, L. (2016) 'Accounting practice and the historic turn: Performing budget histories', *Management & Organizational History*, 11(2): 77–98.
- Daley, R. (1980) *An American Saga. Juan Trippe and His Pan Am Empire*. New York: Random House.
- Decker, S. (2013) 'The silence of the archives: Business history, post-colonialism and archival ethnography', *Management & Organizational History*, 8(2): 155–73.
- Durepos, G. (2009) ANTi-History: Toward an historiographical approach to (re)assembling knowledge of the past. PhD dissertation, Saint Mary's University, Canada. Available from <http://worldcat.org/z-wcorg/database>.
- Durepos, G. (2015) 'ANTi-History: Toward amodern histories', in P. G. McLaren, A. Mills, and T. Weatherbee (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Management and Organizational History*. London: Routledge, pp. 153–80.
- Durepos, G. and Mills, A. (2012a) 'Actor network theory, ANTi-History, and critical organizational historiography', *Organization*, 19(6): 703–21.
- Durepos, G. and Mills, A. (2012b) *ANTi-History: Theorizing the Past, History, and Historiography in Management and Organizational Studies*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Durepos, G., Mills, A. and Helms Mills, J. (2008) 'Tales in the manufacture of knowledge: writing a company history of Pan American World Airways', *Management & Organizational History*, 3(1): 63–80.
- Durepos, G., Mills, A. and Weatherbee, T. (2012) 'Theorizing the past: Realism, relativism, relationalism and the reassembly of Weber', *Management & Organizational History*, 7(3): 267–81.
- Ermarth, E. D. (2007) 'The closed space of choice: A manifesto on the future of history', in K. Jenkins, S. Morgan, and A. Munslow (eds.), *Manifestos for History*. New York: Routledge, pp. 50–66.
- Foster, J., Mills, A. and Weatherbee, T. (2014) 'History, field definition and management

- studies: The case of the New Deal', *Journal of Management History*, 20(2): 179–99.
- Foucault, M. (1982) *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Graham, P. (ed.) (1996). *Mary Parker Follett: Prophet of Management*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Hartt, C. (2013) 'Actants without actors: Poly-dimensional discussion of a regional conference', *Tamara: Journal for Critical Organization Inquiry*, 11(3): 15–25.
- Hartt, C., Mills, A., Helms Mills, J. and Corrigan, L. (2014) 'Sense-making and actor networks: The non-corporeal actant and the making of an Air Canada history', *Management & Organizational History*, 9(3): 288–304.
- Hartt, C., Mills, A., Helms Mills, J. and Durepos, G. (2012) 'Markets, organizations, institutions and national identity: Pan American Airways, postcoloniality and Latin America', *Critical Perspectives on International Business*, 8(1): 14–36.
- Hobsbawm, E. (1997) *On History*. New York: The New Press.
- Jenkins, K. (1991) *Re-Thinking History*. London: New York: Routledge.
- Koontz, H. (ed.) (1962) *Toward a Unified Theory of Management*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Latour, B. (1986) 'The powers of association', in J. Law (ed.), *Power, Action and Belief: A New Sociology of Knowledge?* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp. 264–80.
- Latour, B. (1996) 'Do scientific objects have a history?' *Common Knowledge*, 5(1): 76–91.
- Latour, B. (1999a) 'On recalling ANT', in J. Law and J. Hassard (eds.), *Actor Network Theory and After*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, pp.15–25.
- Latour, B. (1999b) *Pandora's Hope: Essays On the Reality of Science Studies*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Latour, B. (2005) *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Law, J. (1994) *Organizing Modernity*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers.
- Law, J. (1999) 'After ANT: Complexity, naming and topology'. In J. Law and J. Hassard (eds.), *Actor Network Theory and After*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, pp.1–14.
- Law, J. (2008) *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. New York: Routledge.
- Law, J. and Hassard, J. (eds.) (1999). *Actor Network Theory and After*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Law, J. and Mol, A. (1995) 'Notes on materiality and sociality', *The Sociological Review*, 43(2): 274–94.
- Law, J. and Urry, J. (2004) 'Enacting the social', *Economy and Society*, 33(3): 390–410.
- MacNeil, R. and Mills, A. (2015) 'Organizing a precarious black box: An actor-network account of the Atlantic Schools of Business, 1980-2006', *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 32(3): 203–13.
- Mannheim, K. (1985) *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Mills, A. and Durepos, G. (2010) 'ANTI-History', in A. Mills, G. Durepos, and E. Wiebe (eds.), *SAGE Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, Vol. 1, pp. 26–9.
- Mills, A. and Helms Mills, J. (2018) 'Archival research', in C. Cassell, A. Cunliffe, and G. Grandy (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods*. London: Sage.
- Mills, A., Weatherbee, T. and Durepos, G. (2014) 'Resembling Weber: The-past-as-history in management and organization studies', *Organization*, 21(2): 225–43.
- Mills, A., Weatherbee, T., Foster, J. and Helms Mills, J. (2015a) 'The New Deal, history, and management and organization studies: Lessons, insights and reflections', in P. Genoe McLaren, A. Mills, and T. Weatherbee (eds.), *Routledge Companion to Management and Organizational History*. London: Routledge, pp. 265–84.
- Mills, A., Weatherbee, T. and Genoe McLaren, P. (2015b) 'Actors, networks, theory and history: What are we producing?', in P. Genoe McLaren, A. Mills, and T. Weatherbee (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Management and Organization Studies*. London: Routledge, pp. 380–5.
- Mol, A. (1999) 'Ontological politics: A word and some questions', in J. Law and J. Hassard (eds.), *Actor Network Theory and After*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, pp. 74–89.

- Mol, A. (2002) *The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Munslow, A. (2010) *The Future of History*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Myrick, K., Helms Mills, J. and Mills, A. (2013). 'History-making and the Academy of Management: An ANTi-History perspective', *Management & Organizational History*, 8(4): 345–70.
- Suddaby, R. (2016) 'Toward a historical consciousness: Following the historic turn in management thought', *M@n@gement*, 19(1): 46–60.
- Weatherbee, T. (2016) 'History of-in-and critical management studies', in A. Prasad, P. Prasad, A. Mills and J. Helms Mills (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Critical Management Studies*. London: Routledge, pp. 281–98.
- Witzel, M. (2012) *A History of Management Thought*. London: Routledge.
- Wren, D. A. (1972) *The Evolution of Management Thought*. New York: The Ronald Press Co.

'Use Your Feelings': Emotion as a Tool for Qualitative Research

Kendra Dyanne Rivera

You must unlearn what you have learned ... Try not. Do. Or do not. There is no try. Yoda. (Lucas & Kershner, 1980)

Throughout the *Star Wars* saga (1977–2015), various characters are consistently being told to 'search your feelings' and 'use the force' to help them understand relationships, make decisions, and gain wisdom. In the scene wherein Yoda instructs a young Luke Skywalker to 'unlearn what you have learned', he is trying to teach the Padawan student how to let go of his inhibitions, fear, and desire for control. Instead, Yoda wants Luke to focus his energies (the force) with positive mindfulness. Yoda explains, in only a way that Yoda can, that to 'try' is pointless – rather the Jedi in training must simply 'do' the work. Indeed, this advice is counter-intuitive to many, who would understand wisdom and decision-making as cognitive and rational endeavors, not guided by intuition or emotion. In order to follow this advice, one would have to 'unlearn what you

have learned', particularly for those of us raised in a Western tradition that places the ultimate value on rationality, and in academe, where the 'scientific method' requires linear procedures, systematic reasoning, and stoic objectivity.

As I thought about how to write about emotion in qualitative research, a voice from early in my own research training echoed in my head, saying, '*Use the Force*'. I might also have been influenced by a recent marathon of *Star Wars* movies with my son, but no matter the reason, I decided to utilize the wisdom of Yoda to guide this chapter. Of course, I realize that no self-respecting SAGE *Handbook* chapter should begin with quotes from Yoda or a discussion of what is arguably one of the most quintessential popular culture icons: *Star Wars*. However, I don't know any better way to *show*, as well as *teach*, emotion in our research. Whether you are actually studying emotion as a topic of your research, or whether you simply want to be more emotionally engaged in the research process,

this chapter is geared toward exploring the strengths that emotion presents to the qualitative research process. *Star Wars*' (Kazanjian & Marquand, 1983; Lucas & Kershner, 1980; McCallum & Lucas, 2005) frequent advice to 'use your feelings' can be a guide in qualitative research, and I believe it is very sage advice indeed.

AN INTRODUCTION TO EMOTION IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Many of the truths that we cling to depend on our point of view. Yoda. (McCallum & Lucas, 2005)

Qualitative researchers have often championed the value of emotion in the research process. Although emotion has been portrayed as 'the enemy' of rational thought in many traditional social science fields (Fineman, 2005; Li et al., 2014), the use of personal reflection, which is replete with emotion, is a trademark in many areas of study, including feminist theory, queer theory, and critical ethnography (Conquer-good, 1991; Denzin, 2005; Haynes, 2006; Rambo Ronai, 1992). Yet even while many scholars have encouraged reflexivity and subjectivity in qualitative research (i.e. the 'Reflexive Turn,' Van Maanen, 1988), the existence of emotion explicitly within the research process is often invisible and is rarely mentioned in published qualitative studies or methodological text books (Haynes, 2006). However, because emotion is an integral part of all human activity, organizing practices, and communication, it is necessarily an important aspect of the research process as well (Kara, 2013; Rivera & Tracy, 2014).

'Emotion' is a challenging concept to define or describe. Although many scholars agree that emotion includes a 'subjective experience, expressive reactions, physiological reactions, different kinds of behavior and certain types of cognition' (Munkejord, 2009,

p. 152), there are disagreements about which of these elements is the most important. Often described as 'response tendencies' that influence actions (Gross, 2002, p. 282), emotions are 'relatively brief sensations that take place in response to specific incidents or experiences' yet they are also 'essentially social and have social consequences' (Scarduzio & Malvini-Redden, 2015).

Emotions may be seen as beneficial for research because they help us form relationships with participants and can provide intuitive insights in the field. However, emotion may also be seen as disruptive for good research because it is subjective, changing, and may 'cloud' rational thought. Indeed, as Cunningham and Kirkland (2012) note, 'definitions of "emotion" often include an implicit (or even explicit) contrast with "cognition"' (p. 369) and therefore create a false dichotomy that pits emotion as the opposite (and less favorable) process than rational cognition. Indeed, many scholars contend that emotion is part of the cognitive system (Cunningham & Kirkland, 2012) or is part of a complex system of rationality (Li et al., 2014). Yet this perspective subsumes emotion as part of the greater system of cognition or reason. In another view, Matsumoto and Hwang (2012) offer a bio-cultural model, arguing 'different domains of emotion are more relatively influenced by biology or culture' and propose various delineations or categories for specific emotions or affective states (p. 91). However, Matsumoto and Hwang's position shifts the dichotomy from rational/emotional to biological/cultural.

In contrast, Sinclair's (2011) work resisting 'traditional' leadership models advocates for mindfulness in management studies, arguing, 'bodies activate unconscious processes and gendered societal archetypes that reinforce or undermine authority, power and socially-constructed credibility' (p. 118). Sinclair's standpoint provides an opportunity to explore the ways in which emotion is experienced in our everyday lives – as embodied and necessary for building relationships, understanding

our worlds, and making decisions on a daily basis. Indeed, emotion and cognition need not be at odds with each other. In the past, qualitative researchers have suggested that we ‘blur the boundaries between categories’ because dichotomous thinking may hinder how we perform our intellectual and empirical work (Southgate & Shying, 2014). Although some qualitative scholars have begun to explore the role of emotion in their research, it is rare to write about emotion in the (re)presentation of our work. This chapter therefore echoes calls from previous researchers to bridge the gap between the actual lived experiences of the research process and the more abstract methodological discussions that appear in our scholarly publications (Cunningham & Kirkland, 2012; Haynes, 2006; Rivera & Tracy, 2014).

In this chapter, I begin by discussing emotion as an integral part of sense-making in qualitative research. Next, I explore the role of emotion in specific research contexts providing an example from my own research notes. Third, I explore emotion as a tool in research, beginning with the importance of reflexivity, moving to the use of emotion throughout the methodological process, and concluding with emotion as a tool for representing research findings. This chapter is meant not only for those who study emotion, it is also written for those who want to more actively engage emotion into their *research process*. Woven throughout the chapter is the assumption that emotions are already present in our research. We must learn how to acknowledge, value, and use them to benefit our participants, our analysis, and our representation.

EMOTION: AN INTEGRAL PART OF SENSE-MAKING WITHIN RESEARCH

*Already know you that which you need. Yoda.
(Kazanjan & Marquand, 1983)*

Emotion is an integral part of the sense-making process. And the good news is, we

use sense-making every day! Rather than accessing a new skill, sense-making is about harnessing a process we already use in daily life, and learning to articulate the role that emotion plays in that process. Through sense-making, we understand our worlds and build knowledge about the people and phenomena around us. According to Weick (1995), who originated the concept, sense-making is the process by which ‘people generate what they interpret’ (p. 13). Consensus amongst scholars is that sense-making refers to the processes by which people attempt to explain or understand ambiguous/novel, unexpected, or confusing issues or events (Brown et al., 2015; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Sense-making is therefore about *invention*, because it requires both micro and macro levels of knowledge creation (Colville et al., 2012; Weick, 1995). As such, we draw on a variety of sources – past, present, and future – in order to make sense of our experiences.

Research on sense-making has been prevalent within organizational, management, and business research (Brown, Colville, & Pye, 2014), and has been used in a variety of management studies, such as network theories (e.g. Henneberg et al., 2010; Öberg et al., 2008); inter-organizational studies (Ford & Håkansson, 2006); executive leadership and management (Ping Li, 2015; Thiel et al., 2012); decision-making or change (Balogun & Johnson, 2005); and studies about identity formation and socialization (Cunliffe & Coupland, 2012; Humphreys & Brown, 2002; Rivera, 2015; Sluss et al., 2012; Tracy, 2004; Tracy et al., 2006). Weick (2001) sums up sense-making by asking, ‘How can I know what I think until I see what I say?’ (p. 189). Recent scholars have tried to expand this focus on ‘thinking’ by exploring embodied ways of knowing, such as Rivera and Tracy (2014), who ask, ‘How can I know what I feel until I see what I do?’ (p. 215). To this list of sense-making inquiries, I now add, ‘How do I know what I think, until I see what I feel?’

Within sense-making, emotion is one tool (alongside cognition and embodiment) that

helps us in the process of knowledge creation. A long history of feminist scholarship considers emotions as 'rich epistemic resources that provoke rather than prescribe our understandings of the social world' (Southgate & Shying, 2014, p. 233). Although emotion has not been extensively studied in the sense-making literature, this is not particularly surprising given how little attention emotion receives in organizational and management literature more broadly. It is important to note that scholars who have explored emotion within sense-making see it as 'an important factor in shaping the kind of sensemaking process that occurs' (Maitlis et al., 2013, p. 223). Indeed, in contrast to research that proposes that emotion has a negative role in sense-making (Weick et al., 2005), some research proposes that emotion is actually a trigger that begins the sense-making process and that the valence of emotions (positive or negative feelings) may have a significant impact on sense-making processes (Bartunek, Balgun, & Do, 2011; Godbold, 2013; Greene et al., 2001; Maitlis et al., 2013). In particular, many scholars argue that emotions are '*essential* to decision-making' (emphasis in original, Li et al., 2014, p. 295), and increasingly call for emotion to be an openly explored part of the research process (Rivera & Tracy, 2014). As Kara (2013) inquires, 'are there, perhaps, ways in which we could *use our emotions* to benefit our research?' (p. 71).

Sense-making is therefore concerned with the everyday experiences and activities of people, and is integral for the qualitative research processes. In order to design, implement, interpret, analyze, and (re)present our findings, qualitative scholars engage in sense-making processes, wherein we seek to understand and explain novel, unexpected, or confusing issues or events. In addition, sense-making's emphasis on communication, language, and storytelling (Weick, 1995) is particularly relevant for qualitative research, given the need to collect data via ethnographic methods, interviews, and focus groups – all of which are communicative in their origins, and most often are then

translated into written field notes or transcriptions. In particular, emotion is a useful tool for accessing tacit knowledge in our research – the wisdom we hold inside is often challenging to articulate without the help of our emotions and embodied experiences.

EMOTION: A TOOL FOR THE HUMAN INSTRUMENT IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Control, control. You must learn control! Yoda.
(Lucas & Kershner, 1980)

In qualitative scholarship, the researcher is 'the human instrument' (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) through which we gather data and gain understandings about the phenomena we study. As noted, emotion is a key part of the sense-making process by which we gain these understandings, but as researchers we must also learn to access and control the wisdom carried within our emotion. Emotion allows the researcher to be fully present and engaged with their participants and data, as they take part in gaining understanding about the phenomena under study (Haynes, 2006). Emotion is a type of tacit knowledge that can be used as a tool for assisting in the sense-making processes that lead us through our research.

As a way to illustrate emotion as 'tacit knowledge' which leads to sense-making, I offer the following example, drawn from my field notes at the start of my research with the U.S. Border Patrol. As a scholar-in-training (a Padawan, if you will!), I offer a glimpse into a short fieldwork experience in which emotion is felt, encouraged, and useful all at the same time.

'Use the Force' Field Notes/ Interview Notes Written 9/21/07; Edited 12/30/15 and 11/20/16

I sat in the dimly lit coffee shop drinking in the earthy smell of coffee and old books. I would have preferred to meet the Public Relations Officer from

the Border Patrol at the sector office, but he suggested a neutral location. It was my first official interview with an agent, and I tapped my nails nervously on the table. A lot was riding on this interview. This agent held the key to accessing other agents, and the Patrol sector in general.

I could tell by the look on a student's face – eye-brows furrowed deep, mouth dropped open – that Agent Ramirez had arrived. Another student's lips mouthed a silent, 'what the fuck?' I turned to meet my new 'gatekeeper'.

'Agent Ramirez!' I said, not really asking, since it was clear who he was. I tried not to notice that the students were now eyeing me with suspicion too.

'Hi, Kendra' he responded, taking hold of my extended hand.

I sat at the table where I had already situated my notebook and pen. Agent Ramirez paused, motionless amidst the bustle of the mid-day coffee run. Then, he quickly pulled out a chair and looked over his shoulder at the door before sitting down.

'Would you like to sit here?' I suddenly remembered that most law enforcement want to see the entrance, so they can keep track of people in the room.

'Yes, that would be great,' he sighed, taking what was once my seat. 'I really hate to sit with my back to the door'.

'I understand', I said. I kicked myself internally for not considering where this agent would like to sit.

He began telling me about his role at the Border Patrol. He told me how he's a lieutenant, but he volunteered for the position as Public Affairs Officer. After a couple of years, he'll go back to the field. He pointed to the various parts of his uniform, explaining what each section meant.

'I noticed that your badge is covered...' I let my voice trail off.

'Yes,' he said, placing his hand over the badge. 'One of our agents was killed in a head-on collision last week. He was young too, and had a young family'.

'I'm so sorry', I said, hoping he could see that I was genuine. 'That must be really hard'.

'We cover our badges from the time of death until after the funeral service, and the service is tomorrow'.

'I've been surprised to learn how many Border Patrol agents die on duty'.

'Yes, we lose too many agents', he shook his head. 'You know, we're the only sector in the U.S. without a permanent checkpoint?'

'No, I didn't know that'. I felt jolted by the sudden change of topic. Perhaps this was his way of telling me he didn't want to discuss agents' death. We continued talking, me taking notes about checkpoints and daily routines, and statistics about the number of undocumented immigrants or pounds of narcotics apprehended by the Patrol in this area. Toward the end of our conversation, after I had talked about my son and we had laughed about south-west Texas, I asked, 'So how did you come to be at the Border Patrol?'

He smiled thinly, and relaxed back into his chair. 'I went to college. I was the first in my family to go to college. And one day, I met a recruiter. So I took the test. I didn't know what else I would do with my life. But it was a hard decision'. He leaned forward, then sat back again. He looked over my shoulder. I wondered if I should fill the silence with another question, but his movement seemed to hint that he had more to say. I closed my notebook. He leaned back in his chair, and locked me in an intense gaze.

'My dad worked in a restaurant when I was a kid. He was a hard worker. He had come up to the U.S. illegally. Sometimes, the Border Patrol would come into the restaurant for lunch and one day, there was a mess in the dining room, so my dad went out to clean it. Two Border Patrol agents were sitting there eating, and they could tell my dad was nervous by the way he looked at them. When he was done, he walked straight through the kitchen, took off his apron, and headed to the back door. He thought, "well that's it. I gotta get outa here"'.

'But when my dad opened the door, there was one of the agents. He pulled my father to the side and said, "Are you illegal?" and my dad said, "yes". The agent gave my dad a card and told him to call this number. So my father called the place and it was a service to help you become a citizen. So both my parents went through the program. And on the day my father became a citizen, he looked to the back of the room, and there was the agent'.

Folding his hands together, Agent Ramirez leaned even over the small table between our chairs, closing the distance separating us. 'So when the lady called me and told me I had passed the Border Patrol test, I asked my parents what they thought.

My dad said, "you gotta do what you gotta do. Just don't forget who you are". And so that's the advice he gave me'.

He sat back in his chair again. 'I decided at that point how it would be. I decided to treat people as they treat you'. He paused. Meeting my smile with a nod, he continued, 'Respect equals respect. Disrespect equals disrespect'.

'Agent Ramirez', I decided to risk one last question.

'Please', he said laughing and shaking his head, 'Call me Javi!'

'Okay, Javi', I started again, 'Before you leave, do you have any tips for me as I try to meet with other agents? I had a full protocol and interview guide my teacher made me design, but the Customs agent I met with literally took a pen and crossed that out, so...' my voice staggered off.

'Well, that was probably good advice!' Javi laughed. 'You did just fine with this interview. Just "use the force"'. He nodded knowingly as he stood up.

I laughed out loud and closed my notebook. 'Use the force, huh?' I'd been a Star Wars fan since I was born (in 1977, the same year the first Star Wars movie was released). So I knew exactly what he was talking about, but I still felt confused. 'That's your advice?' I sat stunned looking up at him.

'Yeah', he kept laughing. 'You know, "use your feelings". Cause nothing else can prepare you for our special kind of shit'.

I stood up and extended my hand.

'Okay, then. I'll channel my inner Jedi, and listen for Yoda's voice'.

'You'll do fine, kid', he told me shaking my hand. 'I enjoyed meeting with you. Let me know how I can help'. He turned and left as abruptly as he had come, seemingly oblivious to the stir his presence caused in others.

Within this short story about Agent Ramirez and myself, we can see several emotional 'leakages' in the supposed 'rational research process'. In addition, we can also see that my emotions led to decisions that in turn led to additional knowledge. Take for example, my

embarrassment and frustration at not giving Agent Ramirez the seat with the view of the door automatically, since I knew law enforcement officers usually preferred to sit where they can see (and be prepared for) others who might be approaching them. Upon deeper reflection, my emotion 'triggered' a thought process about the interaction that might otherwise have gone unnoticed – this interaction actually allowed me to know Agent Ramirez a little better, and showed me a vulnerability of his. This momentary sharing of emotion was rare in my interactions with agents, and I believe it likely also helped lead to Agent Ramirez discussing his father with me.

As a key to our sense-making processes, emotions are a valuable tool for accessing understandings about context and participants in our research (Woodthorpe, 2007), in ways that our cognitive or rational sense-making processes may not be able to achieve. We do not base our actions or decisions on reasoning alone – we also do what feels right, based on our experiences and who we are as individuals. Similarly, we make sense of events after the fact by utilizing emotion as well as reason. As we note in my research with Border Patrol agents, our emotions 'fundamentally construct and refract meaning' (Rivera & Tracy, 2014, p. 215). Indeed, it is precisely because our emotions impact decision-making (Stocco & Fum, 2007), that they should be fully recognized and embraced as part of the research process (Munkejord, 2009).

'USE YOUR FEELINGS:' EMOTION WITHIN THE METHOD

Okay, if you've made it this far, then you may be asking, 'What does emotion look like in our research?' 'How might we more strategically utilize emotion in our qualitative studies?' As Yoda would say, we need to unlearn what we have learned with regard to 'good' research as being exclusively rational, linear, and objective. Instead, we need to 'use

our feelings' as a guide toward the knowledge and skills that are so vital for doing our work. It's not that we should throw out the practices in which many of us were trained. Even Master Obi-Wan in Star Wars encourages his student to 'Be mindful of your thoughts' as well as his feelings. Instead, I propose opening ourselves to the insights that emotion brings, and to acknowledging the ways in which emotion has always helped to shape our research. Therefore, in the remainder of the chapter, I focus on emotion within our research process and the ways in which we may utilize specific strategies to harness our emotions, tacit knowledge, and sense-making in order to expand our understanding of the phenomena we explore.

KEY ONE: REFLEXIVITY AND SUBJECTIVITY

You will find only what you bring in. Yoda. (Lucas & Kershner, 1980)

In order to utilize our emotions effectively, researchers need to become acutely aware of what we bring into our research. We need to know what our emotions are, why we are feeling them, and how they might help us (or hinder us) in our research. Reflexivity allows researchers to identify, name, and analyze our emotions so that they may be utilized in our research (Kara, 2013). As such, reflexivity is a key first step in accessing emotional tacit knowledge and making sense of our research through a lens of emotion.

Reflexivity has long been a central tenet of critical research traditions. At its essence, reflexivity can be defined as a form of critical self-questioning that enables deeper exploration of actions and practice (Kara, 2013). Brannick and Coghlan (2007) articulate reflexivity as a process that can unlock our deeply rooted tacit knowledge, in order to repurpose that knowledge as theoretical knowledge. Similarly, Hughes (1999)

explains that reflexive practice has an empowering impact on the researcher because it 'enables learning from experience' (p. 282). Thus, it is the purposeful act of reflexivity that provides an avenue for naming, reflecting upon, and gaining understanding from our emotional experiences.

In an example of the importance of reflexivity (without studying emotion specifically as a research topic), Carolyn Ellis has written about her ethnographic research with the 'Fisher Folk' (1986), and how her lack of reflexivity led to ethical miscalculations in the presentation of her research (2007). She reveals that a lack of critical self-evaluation camouflaged her own desire for a good story, at the cost of the privacy of some of her participants, who had become 'intimate others'. Ellis (2007) encourages long-term reflection as she notes, 'by repeatedly questioning and reflecting on my ethical decisions, I have gained a greater understanding of the range of my choices and the kind of researcher I want to be' (p. 5). In this case, reflexivity – even after a long period of time – can lead to greater knowledge and wisdom about our craft as researchers.

Reflexivity acknowledges that the ways we experience emotion and ourselves will change depending on our situation and the contexts in which we do research. It also embraces the awareness that the researcher and the participants continually affect each other through the research process. Both of these aspects of reflexivity may also be known as 'subjectivity', wherein the researcher acknowledges and interrogates their subject position in relation to their research and participants (Ellis & Flaherty, 1992). As such, reflexivity and emotion are not in a static state, but rather must be continually employed and explored in order to make sense of the research process, the participants, the data, and the analysis (Munkejord, 2009). I will never know how my relationship with Agent Ramirez might have developed if I had responded with different emotions when I saw him making the emotional decision about whether to tell me

about his father, but the decision led to new insight regardless of what might have been.

Reflexivity is therefore a space 'in between' our 'otherness' and 'insiderness' as a researcher, as well as a position 'in between' our rational cognition and our emotional tacit knowledge (Cunliffe, 2003). According to Munkejord (2009), the 'betweenness' of reflexivity 'implies that social realities are constructed between the researcher and the participants in dialogue' (p. 155). Reflexivity therefore serves as a bridge between seemingly dichotomous ways of processing our research, connecting the rational to the emotional and embodied through purposeful exploration of both. And I believe that acknowledging the role that emotion plays in our research is essential for developing ethical and effective research processes.

KEY TWO: DESIGNING RESEARCH WITH EMOTION IN MIND

Train yourself to let go of everything you fear to lose. Yoda. (McCallum & Lucas, 2005)

Emotion plays a role in the research process from the moment we begin to formulate questions in our minds about what topics to explore or what participants to study. Many scholars chose to research topics or populations based on prior experiences or passions. Yet whether we explicitly acknowledge (or even know ourselves) an emotional reason for our topics of research, we bring previous knowledge, insights, experiences, and understandings into our research programs as they develop (Haynes, 2006). Emotion impacts the research process in terms of 'what is studied or not studied, by whom and in what way', in addition to 'influencing researchers' interpretations of a situation' (Widdowfield, 2000, p. 199). Therefore, it's important to acknowledge, name, and explore what our emotions may reveal to us about our research from the very start of the research process: design.

Asking Questions Reflexively

As discussed, the design process should begin with reflexivity – we question ourselves to explicate the nuanced details of how our research progresses, and acknowledge why certain decisions are being made. Of course, I've never actually sat in some mythical and magical research lab and just dreamed up a research protocol from scratch. Generally, my research process starts from an experience I've had, a conversation that intrigued me, or a problem I wanted to solve. From there it morphs into a vague idea, followed by many more conversations, articles read, and connections made. But regardless of the lack of linear process – whenever you figure out that you *are* indeed designing a research study (at least by the time you decide about applying for ethics approval), you should begin to reflexively consider your positionality in the research, and how your experiences may color your research design.

By acknowledging the emotional contributions to our study up front and explicitly, we expand our abilities to make sense of the phenomena we are studying, and our theorizing can be fuller and more effective (Kara, 2013). Writing reflexively is therefore a method of inquiry into our research (Richardson, 2000). Through writing, we come to understand more than we previously did about our research, the people, and phenomena we study, and ourselves as living and breathing contributors to our research endeavors (Richardson, 1994, 2000; Richardson & Adams St. Pierre, 2005). As Richardson (2000) states, 'by writing in different ways, we discover new aspects of our topic and our relationship to it. Form and content are inseparable' (p. 923). Thus, the process of interpretation is powerfully located with the practice of writing.

Gaining Access and Keeping 'Score'

Another key step to exploring emotion in our research design is the process of gaining

access to a population or a site to study. Anyone who has ever attempted to gain access to a ‘private’ organization or ‘at risk’ population knows the integral role that emotion (and often emotional labor) plays in the research process (Rivera & Tracy, 2014). Because we utilize emotion as a key part of relationship building, it is important to interrogate these emotions for meanings, particularly to responses we have to specific organizational members or participants. Many of us keep a record of all participants we encounter, marking down key demographic information such as age, income, race, and education – such as how Tracy (2012) describes cataloguing her research of correctional officers. In addition to this type of data, I recommend that researchers wishing to engage emotion in the research process (regardless of whether you are studying emotion as a topic) also keep a record of emotion. This is because emotion is often one of the most intimate ways to respond to others, particularly if you want to build relationships. Recognizing others’ emotions will allow you to build upon what you know cognitively, and create a more complete picture of participants. To do this, I recommend adding brief descriptions to the participant spreadsheet, noting how you felt, and why you think you felt that way. How might the participants’ emotions impact *your* emotional responses? Consider how this may relate to your research questions, particularly if you find patterns over time.

Designing Interview Protocol

Obviously, there are far too many aspects involved in research design to explore all of them in depth, but a third area of design I encourage you to explore emotion in is the design of your interview protocol. Regardless of the type of interview – from narrative to oral history to confrontational – emotion plays an important role in how people answer questions, and therefore, it should be explicit

in the design. The entire interview process – from preparation to contact and follow up (MacDougall & Fudge, 2001) – is heavily influenced by the management of emotions through the research process. However, in designing the interview protocol, an emotionally informed researcher can consider a variety of strategies to be both ethical and build good rapport.

Rapport refers to the relationship and trust developed by a researcher and participant, usually within the first few minutes of an encounter. Many scholars have consistently noted that rapport is more likely to be developed through non-verbal communication strategies and responses to emotion than in any other part of the research. In her research about emotional geographies, Bondi (2014) notes that focused listening – including responses to emotion – provided a venue through which her participant ‘sensed’ that the researcher is ‘hearing’ her. This technique can be used to develop rapport, regardless of the topic of the interview, and points to how important planning for an interview can be.

The order in which you ask questions may also elicit an emotional reaction, and many researchers chose to put more emotional or challenging questions at the end of an interview. However, if the participant is aware of the research topic, moving the emotional questions earlier in the interview may provide the research with a depth they had not anticipated. For example, when I was interviewing a Border Patrol agent who was displaying negative emotions toward the interview process (folded arms, refusal to sit down, frowning face), I decided to skip to my final question and asked, ‘What advice do you have for new agents?’ To my surprise, this question elicited a highly emotional response (weeping over the loss of a child while on the job), and the interview then continued successfully for over an hour. Thus changing the order of questions can sometimes have a positive impact on the interview experience.

KEY THREE: EMOTION AND ANALYSIS DURING THE RESEARCH PROCESS

You will know ... when you are calm, at peace, passive. A Jedi uses the Force for knowledge and defense, NEVER for attack. Yoda. (Lucas & Kershner, 1980)

During our research, emotion can play a key role in alerting us to meanings that may allow us to probe further in a certain direction, or help us build relationships with participants. In addition, emotion can provide insights into areas for analysis. Even if emotion is not the central focus of study, remaining attuned to the wisdom of our emotional reactions and our participants' emotions can lead to new insights and knowledge in a variety of research situations.

Cultivating Empathy

Qualitative research is focused on people and the individual insights that, put together, can provide new understandings of important phenomena. As such, a key to remember during our research, particularly during ethnographic field research, is the importance of remaining thoughtfully engaged in emotion. For example, the development of empathy is important for our social experiences working with participants. Empathy is the emotional response that stems from the comprehension of what another person feels, and then the ability to re-experience those feelings oneself. Empathy is identified with knowing what another person feels (role taking), feeling what another person feels (emotional congruence), and caring or responding to what the other person feels (sympathetic concern) (Vreeke & Van Der Mark, 2003). Empathy is a therefore highly emotional process that includes both emotional reactions as well as emotional sense-making. In her empirical research with 'transformational elite interviews', Kezar (2003) notes that empathy involves listening and responding in such a way that it places the interviewer into

the position of the interview participant as much as possible. This process relies keenly on the ability to generate and then respond to emotion in the participant. Indeed, as I discovered in my research with Border Patrol agents (Rivera & Tracy, 2015), understanding how another person is feeling can lead directly to questions and responses that can help the researcher not only gain better understandings of the phenomena and population under study, but also of their own emotional research journey.

Emotional Diversity

Another important key to exploring emotion during the research process is that not everyone experiences emotion the way that you experience it. Different cultures may experience and express emotion uniquely, and in ways that are new to the research (Ashkanasy et al., 2002). Often, researchers may approach phenomena such as emotion as 'universal', but research has consistently shown that emotion and emotional displays are culturally specific and therefore to view all participants' emotions, as well as all researchers' emotions as similar can be ethnocentric and damaging to research findings. For example, in their research about worry, Hinton et al. (2000) suggested that emotion played a role in researchers' ability to recruit participants from the Chinese and Chinese-American communities. Similarly, empirical research on non-verbal facial expressions discovered that individuals from the Himba in Namibia did not link facial expressions to specific emotions, whereas U.S. participants did link non-verbal expressions to presumed emotional categories (Gendron et al., 2014). This is significant because previous research (primarily conducted with Western participants) proposed that facial expressions were universally used to communicate universal emotions (such as anger, fear, or joy) (Jack et al., 2012). Therefore, it is important to continuously evaluate our own interpretations of

emotion and communication, while also asking our participants to openly discuss their emotions so as not to reify stereotypes or misinterpret potential findings.

In addition to being aware of cultural diversity, researchers must be cautious in how they interpret and respond to stereotypically gendered emotions in their research. Management and organizational scholars have provided a depth of research demonstrating not only that emotions are socialized based on gender (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011), but also the outcomes of gendering emotional management performances (eg. Lewis, 2008; Lewis & Simpson, 2007). The necessity of understanding gendered emotional performances is underscored in Jewkes' (2011) articles about 'doing prison research differently' to include emotional aspects in the research process and representation. However, in his response to her article, Crewe (2014) argues that masculine reporting of prison research has indeed been both emotional and gendered, while also noting the ways in which research can continue to be emotionally developed and explored. Similarly, I recall a class with one of my mentors, Dr. Sarah Amira de la Garza, who once asked me about a gendered emotional description in my field notes: 'Is the woman "angry"? If it were a male participant, would you describe him as "angry" or "assertive"?' she asked. These examples demonstrate the complexity of emotion in the research process, in research topics, and in representations of research, and suggest that as qualitative scholars, we must interrogate our own gendered emotional assumptions even as we move throughout the research process.

Emotion and Analysis

Emotion can also play a significant role in data analysis, as the researcher cycles between data collection and making sense of the data collected. Munkejord (2009) makes the case that emotions are essential for the

grounded theory process, because the researcher is 'cycling between data collection and making continuous analytical decisions on where next to collect data' (p. 153). In her research with international refugees, Gemignani (2011) takes a constructionist perspective to develop her analysis, noting that 'rather than being discovered in the Other, scientific knowledge emerges as an act of narration and participation' through reflexivity, empathy, and other emotional strategies (p. 706). In their empirical work on healthcare, Hsieh and Shannon (2005) discuss the importance of context for exploring emotion of participants, noting that the way in which analysis develops can have a significant impact on the type of 'findings' the data may yield. In particular, how the researcher herself responds in the setting may help alert them to specific contexts that impact participants as well. For example, writing out emotional stories helped me understand my data and create new categories for analysis (Rivera & Tracy, 2014). Thus a variety of emotional tools may be used in the development of codes for the analysis of data, as our emotion as well as participants' emotion may contribute wisdom toward the better understanding of a variety of experiences and phenomenon.

Coding, particularly qualitative coding that results from grounded research and/or individual reflexivity, can be enhanced through the attention to emotion. The researcher's awareness of the potential emotions involved in the topic – both for participants and for the researcher herself – can and should influence the ways in which the stories and experiences are interpreted and analyzed (Dickson-Swift et al., 2009). For example, Tracy and Rivera's (2010) research with male executives asked participants about work-life perspectives – not necessarily an emotional topic. However, the analysis coded not only verbal responses, but also non-verbal responses and dysfluencies, noting that respondents were more likely to exhibit non-verbal 'blunders' when they discussed gender roles and work-life

issues. The dysfluencies revealed an emotional discomfort with the subject matter, and disruptions to 'traditional' or 'normal' scripts about work and life and gender (Tracy & Rivera, 2010). Thus, attention to emotion, even in coding the data, can and does influence findings. If one researcher codes only for emotional word or terms, while another codes for the context surrounding emotional terms, and another codes for non-verbal emotional responses (such as laughter or tears), each may have unique findings with regard to describing a phenomena – regardless of whether the phenomena seemed 'emotional' or not (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). For research that explicitly seeks to better understand emotion, the importance of coding with emotion in process is even more paramount.

KEY FOUR: EMOTION IN (RE)PRESENTATION

Always pass on what you have learned. Yoda. (McCallum & Lucas, 2005)

How do we 'show' our emotion in our research? The complex world around us inspires a wide spectrum of opportunities for how we can (re)present our research findings to one of many audiences. Although 'traditional' Western academic publication venues have privileged the rational, linear, and 'objective' view of knowledge, since the mid 1980s the range of possibilities for qualitative scholars utilizing 'alternative' representations has grown not only in quantity, but in the accessibility and acceptability within the broader academic community. The methodologies that we choose and subsequent ways that we represent our research do not occur in a vacuum, separate from the rest of our lives. As scholars, the choices we make have consequences for the dissemination of knowledge and for the very real, material impact our work can have on individuals' lives. As Dutton (2003) notes, 'the tools we use to

parse life in organizations are not neutral. They not only allow us to see and write about different things, they enact us differently as scholars and as people more generally' (p. 8). Therefore, I encourage qualitative scholars to include emotion in the (re)presentation of their research, regardless of the publication venue or audience you seek to reach.

'Traditional' Research

Although creative writing practices venues are more common now than in previous decades, most scholars – particularly those on an academic 'tenure track' trajectory – must still publish in 'traditional' research journals, as defined by Western academic standards. Most empirically-based 'top tier' scholarly journals still expect writers to conform to the 'four act play' writing of: I. Introduction/literature review; II. Methods; III. Findings; and IV. Conclusion (Tracy, 2012). However, even within these linear pieces, qualitative scholars can articulate the emotion involved in their research, particularly within the methods section, where we can explicitly acknowledge the role(s) that emotion plays in the research process. In addition, as we participate in the review process, we can encourage other scholars to discuss their positionality, and the role that emotion may have played in their research. If we collectively add this to our service to the field, we will begin to 'normalize' the value that emotion adds to our research.

Creative Writing

As discussed previously, creative writing provides an opportunity to explore data in new ways, and writing as a method of inquiry is particularly well-suited to engage emotion within our data. These texts are also well poised to represent our data to a variety of audiences. As we note in our 'messy text' about emotion at the U.S. Border Patrol,

qualitative researchers must ‘experiment with the format of our writing’ in order to engage our texts emotionally (Rivera & Tracy, 2014, p. 204). Kara (2013) encourages scholars to utilize ‘fiction-writing techniques’ in academic writing in order to ‘convey some of the “messier” aspects of research such as emotion’ (p. 71). Because how we write impacts what we write (Richardson, 2000), creative writing allows researchers to engage emotion and promote emotional actions, such as compassion (Rorty, 1989) or empathy (Rivera & Tracy, 2014).

Creative writing can take a variety of forms. For example, *Poetry* provides another mode of encoding and sharing of lived experiences, grounding both audience and author in the sensuality of our interactions (Brady, 2004). Indeed, writing ‘data’ as poetic text helps to question assumptions about social science by drawing into sharp comparison the ‘reality’ from the constructed writings of the author (Richardson, 2000). Similarly, *creative non-fiction* is yet another opportunity for writing to serve as heuristic and epistemological tool, attempting to translate ‘data’ or traditional information into more interesting reading to reach a broader audience (Caulley, 2008; Goodall, 2008). Lee Gutkind (2008), known as the ‘father of creative non-fiction’, describes the genre as ‘factually accurate prose about real people and events – in a compelling and vivid manner’ (p. 12). Each of these writing methods and genres (for a more exhaustive list, see Ellis & Bochner, 2000 and Richardson, 2000) overlap and blur the boundaries of creative practices and coming to knowledge through the practice of writing.

Applied Writing

Applied writing bridges the gap between academic scholarship and ‘real-world’ lived experiences within organizations. Within management and organizational studies,

some might consider all research to be ‘applied’ in some sense, because it all attempts to understand and improve organizational processes. However, some scholars have also critiqued applied research as biased because it is promoted by specific agendas within the public sector (Tracy, 2012). Regardless of where you fall in this debate, it is clear that writing in applied formats provides scholars with a broader audience. As Tracy (2007) notes, ‘to actually impact problems and promote change, we must not only publish in rigorous scholarly journals, but also present research to various stakeholders in a reader-friendly form’ (p. 109). Scholars who re-think their scholarship for an ‘applied’ audience may publish in practitioner venues, popular sources, or even on-line formats. Rush and Tracy (2010) even discuss the use of Wikipedia as a mode of public scholarship, arguing that scholars should update or create entries as a method for educating ‘those most needing our expertise’ (p. 313). Certainly, the ‘translation’ of our research into non-scholarly publication venues would expand the reach of our scholarship outside of the classroom and the walls of the Ivory Tower.

Performance & Audio/Visual Presentations

Performance can also function as a method of inquiry, and is particularly well-suited for exploring emotion within research. Similar to writing as a method of inquiry, performance studies scholars (who oftentimes are also writers) engage performance as method, analysis, and presentation of data. Similarly, audio and visual ethnographies offer alternative ways to both know a phenomenon, and (re)present research findings. Importantly, all of these formats de-center the written word as the primary focus of our research, data, and findings. Performance as a method of inquiry returns the body to the center of attaining insight, thus shifting the emphasis

'from space to time, from sight and vision to sound and voice, from text to performance, from authority to vulnerability' (Conquergood, 1991, p. 183). This can be done through *dramatic performances* of many types, ranging from monologues to full theater productions (Richardson, 2000). Visual representations draw attention to images as a focal point in evoking feelings, as Stanczak (2007) notes, 'images are not merely appendages to the research, but rather inseparable components to learning about our social worlds' (p. 3). Although researchers have begun to utilize a variety of audio and visual techniques in the gathering of data, (re)presenting that data remains a challenge that future scholars can work to expand.

CONCLUSION

Much to learn, you still have. Yoda. (McCallum & Lucas, 2002)

This chapter has explored emotion within the qualitative research process, provided an example of emotion within field notes, and has offered examples of emotion inclusion throughout the research process. Although it may seem that only those who study emotion as their primary topic of research might need to consider emotion in their research process, I argue that because emotion is integral to our lived experience, it necessarily is integral to our research, regardless of the topic. In fact, emotion is already woven into the fabric of our scholarship – the question is: Will you acknowledge that emotion, and harness the wisdom and strengths that it offers your research?

In his germinal work on the anxieties created by the process of conducting research and the subjectivity inherent in all observational sciences, Devereux (1967) contends that the study of humans, human interactions, and human processes requires the creative use of emotional tools. If we fail to acknowledge

and utilize emotion in our research, he notes that our research risks becoming 'less relevant, more and more segmented', and will 'shed almost no light on what is alive about ... man [sic]' (pp. xviii–xix). Indeed, while some may fear the integration of emotion into our scholarly endeavors, others note that inclusion of emotion is, at least, 'a threat with a corresponding gain' (Jewkes, 2011, p. 63). In other words, while we may give up our claim to rationality, research that requires emotional and social investment is likely to generate personal, social, and professional change in investigators and their participants (Gemignani, 2011).

At the very least, a more mindful inclusion of emotion into the research process will increase our capacity for empathy, and enrich the creativity and depth of our representation of participants' stories (Gair, 2012). There is little question that qualitative research has advanced our theoretical understandings of a variety of phenomena (Bluhm et al., 2010), and the strategic use of emotion as a tool in our research will help us to continue to develop novel methodological techniques. In particular, we as scholars, have an opportunity to continue to learn through our research. As Yoda notes to Luke, 'much to learn, you still have', and indeed we can all continue to learn through the dialogic process of emotional qualitative research. And may we all learn to 'use our feelings!'

REFERENCES

- Altheide, D. L., & Johnson, J. M. (1994). Criteria for assessing interpretive validity in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 485–99). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Alvesson, M., Hardy C., & Harley, B. (2008). Reflecting on reflexivity: Reflexive textual practices in organization and management theory. *Journal of Management Studies*, 45(3), 481–501.

- Ashkanasy, N. M., Härtel, C. E. J., & Daus, C. D. (2002). Diversity and emotion: The new frontiers in organizational behavior research. *Journal of Management*, 28(3), 307–38.
- Balogun, J., & Johnson, G. (2005). From intended strategies to unintended outcomes: The impact of change recipient sensemaking. *Organization Studies*, 26(11), 1573–601.
- Bartunek, J. M., Balogun, J., & Do, B. (2011). Considering planned change anew: Stretching large group interventions strategically, emotionally, and meaningfully. *Academy of Management Annals*, 5(1), 1–52.
- Bluhm, D. J., Harman, W., Lee, T. W., & Mitchell, T. R. (2010). Qualitative research in management: A decade of progress. *Journal of Management Studies*, 48(8), 1866–91.
- Bondi, L. (2014). Understanding feelings: Engaging with unconscious communication and embodied knowledge. *Emotion, Space, and Society*, 10, 44–54.
- Brady, I. (2004). In defense of the sensual: Meaning construction in ethnography and poetics. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(4), 622–644. DOI: 10.1177/1077800404265719
- Brannick, T., & Coghlan, D. (2007). In defense of being 'native': The case for insider academic research. *Organisational Research Methods*, 10(1), 59–74.
- Broadbridge, A., & Simpson, R. (2011). 25 years on: Reflecting on the past and looking to the future in gender and management research. *British Journal of Management*, 22(3), 470–83.
- Brown, A. D., Colville, I., & Pye, A. (2015). Making sense of sensemaking in *Organization Studies*. *Organization Studies*, 36(2), 265–77.
- Caulley, D. N. (2008). Making qualitative research reports less boring: The techniques of writing creative nonfiction. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14(3), 424–49.
- Colville, I., Brown, A. D., & Pye, A. (2012). Simplicity: Sensemaking, organizing and storytelling for our time. *Human Relations*, 65(1), 5–15.
- Conquergood, D. (1991). Rethinking ethnography: Towards a critical cultural politics. *Communication Monographs*, 58, 179–94.
- Crewe, B. (2014). Not looking hard enough: Masculinity, emotion, and prison research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20(4), 392–403.
- Cunliffe, A. L. (2003). Reflexive inquiry in organizational research: Questions and possibilities. *Human Relations*, 56(8), 983–1003.
- Cunliffe, A., & Coupland, C. (2012). From hero to villain to hero: Making experience sensible through embodied narrative sensemaking. *Human Relations*, 65(1), 63–88.
- Cunningham, W. A., & Kirkland, T. (2012). Emotion, cognition and the classical elements of the mind. *Emotion Review*, 4(4), 369–70.
- Denzin, N. K. (2005). Emancipatory discourses and the ethics and politics of interpretation. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed., pp. 933–58). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Devereux, G. (1967). *From Anxiety to Method in the Behavioral Sciences*. The Hague, Paris, France: Mouton.
- Dickson-Swift, V., James, E. L., Kippen, S., & Liamputtong, P. (2009). Researching sensitive topics: Qualitative research as emotion work. *Qualitative Research*, 9(1), 61–79.
- Dutton, J. E. (2003). Breathing life into organizational studies. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 12(1), 5–19.
- Ellis, C. (1986). *Fisher folk: Two communities on Chesapeake Bay*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky.
- Ellis, C. (2007). Telling secrets, revealing lives: Relational ethics in research with intimate others. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13(1), 3–29.
- Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. P. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, pp. 733–68. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ellis, C., & Flaherty, M. G. (1992). *Investigating Subjectivity: Research on Lived Experience*. London: Sage.
- Fineman, S. (Ed.) (1993). *Emotion in Organizations*. London: Sage.
- Fineman, S. (2005). Appreciating emotion at work: Paradigm tensions. *International Journal of Work Organisation and Emotion*, 1(1), 4–19.
- Ford, I. D., & Håkansson, H. (2006). IMP: Some things achieved – Much more to do. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(3/4), 248–58.
- Gair, S. (2012). Feeling their stories: Contemplating empathy, insider/outsider positioning, and enriching qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 22(1), 134–43.

- Gemignani, M. (2011). Between researcher and researched: An introduction to counter-transference in qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17(8), 701–8.
- Gendron, M., Roberson, D., van der Vyver, J. M., & Barrett, L. F. (2014). Perceptions of emotion from facial expressions are not culturally universal: Evidence from a remote culture. *Emotion*, 14(2), 251–62.
- Godbold, N. J. (2013). An information need for emotional cues: Unpacking the role of emotions in sense-making. *Information Research*, 18(1), 1–10.
- Goodall, H. L. Jr. (2008). *Writing Qualitative Inquiry: Self, Stories, and Academic Life*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Greene, J. D., Sommerville, R. B., Nystrom, L. E., Darley, J. M., & Cohen, J. D. (2001). An fMRI investigation of emotional engagement in moral judgment. *Science*, 293(5537), 2105–8.
- Gross, J. J. (2002). Emotion regulation: Affective, cognitive, and social consequences. *Psychophysiology*, 39(3), 281–91.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1998). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Landscape of Qualitative Research* (pp. 195–220). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Guba, E.G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin u. Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd edition) (pp. 191–215). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Gutkind, L. (2008). Private and public: The range and scope of creative nonfiction. In L. Gutkind (Ed.), *Keep it Real: Everything You Need to Know about Researching and Writing Creative Nonfiction* (pp. 11–28). New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Haynes, K. (2006). A therapeutic journey? Reflections on the effects of research on researcher and participants. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 1(3), 204–21.
- Henneberg, S. C., Naudé, P., & Mouzas, S. (2010). Sense-making and management in business networks: Some observations, considerations and a research agenda. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 39(3), 355–60.
- Hinton, L., Guo, Z., Hillygus, J., & Levkoff, S. (2000). Working with culture: A qualitative analysis of barriers to the recruitment of Chinese-American family caregivers for dementia research. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology*, 15(2), 119–37.
- Hsieh, H. F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), 1277–88.
- Hughes, C. (1999). Learning to be intellectually insecure: The dis/empowering effects of reflexive practice. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 1(4), 281–96.
- Humphreys, M., & Brown, A. D. (2002). Narratives of organizational identity and identification: A case study of hegemony and resistance. *Organization Studies*, 23(3), 421–47.
- Jack, R. E., Garrod, O. G. B., Yu, H., Caldara, R., & Schyns, P.G. (2012). Facial expressions of emotion are not culturally universal. *Proceeding of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA*, 109(19), 7241–4.
- Jewkes, Y. (2011). Autoethnography and emotion as intellectual resources: Doing prison research differently. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 18(1), 63–75.
- Kara, H. (2013). It's hard to tell how research feels: Using fiction to enhance academic research and writing. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 8(1), 70–84.
- Kazanjan, H. (Producer), & Marquand, R. (Director). (1983). *Star Wars: Episode IV Return of the Jedi* [Motion picture]. United States of America: Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.
- Kezar, A. (2003). Transformational elite interviews: Principles and problems. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(3), 395–415.
- Lewis, P. (2008). Emotion work and emotion space: using a spatial perspective to explore the challenging of masculine emotion management practices. *British Journal of Management*, 19(S1), S130–40.
- Lewis, P., & Simpson, R. (2007). *Gendering Emotions in Organizations*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Li, Y., Ashkanasy, N. M., & Ahlstrom, D. (2014). The rationality of emotions: A hybrid process model of decision-making under uncertainty. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 31(1), 293–308.

- Lucas, G. (Producer), & Kershner, I. (Director). (1980). *Star Wars: Episode V The Empire Strikes Back* [Motion picture]. United States of America: Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.
- MacDougall, C., & Fudge, E. (2001). Planning and recruiting the sample for focus groups and in-depth interviews. *Qualitative Health Research*, 11(1), 117–26.
- Maitlis, S., & Christianson, M. (2014). Sense-making in organizations: Taking stock and moving forward. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 8(1), 57–125.
- Maitlis, S., Vogus, T. J., & Lawrence, T. B. (2013). Sensemaking and emotion in organizations. *Organizational Psychology Review*, 3(3), 222–47.
- Matsumoto, D., & Hwang, H. S. (2012). Culture and emotion: The integration of biological and cultural contributions. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 43(1), 91–118.
- McCallum, R. (Producer), & Lucas, G. (Director). (2002). *Star Wars: Episode II Attack of the Clones* [Motion picture]. United States of America: Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.
- McCallum, R. (Producer), & Lucas, G. (Director). (2005). *Star Wars: Episode III Revenge of the Sith* [Motion picture]. United States of America: Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.
- Munkejord, K. (2009). Methodological emotional reflexivity: The role of researcher emotions in grounded theory research. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 4(2), 151–67.
- Öberg, C., Henneberg, S. C., & Mouzas, S. (2008). Changing network pictures: Evidence from mergers and acquisitions. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 36(7), 926–40.
- Ping Li, P. (2015). The economic-social duality for executive rationale: The interplay between resource pool and game rule for sense-giving and sense-making. *Management and Organization Review*, 11(2), 211–16.
- Rambo Ronai, C. (1992). The reflexive self through narrative: A night in the life of an erotic dancer/researcher. In C. Ellis & M. G. Flaherty (Eds.), *Investigating Subjectivity: Research on Lived Experience* (pp. 102–23). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Richardson, L. (1994). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 516–529). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Richardson, L. (2000). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (2nd ed., pp. 923–48). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Richardson, L., & Adams St. Pierre, E. (2005). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (3rd ed., pp. 959–78). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rivera, K. D. (2015). Emotional taint: Making sense of emotional dirty work at the U.S. Border Patrol. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 29(2), 198–228.
- Rivera, K. D., & Tracy, S. J. (2014). Embodying emotional dirty work: A messy text of patrolling the border. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 9(3), 201–22.
- Rorty, R. (1989). *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Rush, E. K., & Tracy, S. J. (2010). Wikipedia as public scholarship: Communicating our impact online. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 38(3), 309–15.
- Scarduzio, J. A., & Malvini-Redden, S. (2015). The positive outcomes of negative emotional displays: A multi-level analysis of emotion in bureaucratic work. *Electronic Journal of Communication: Special Issue on Emotion in Organizations*. Retrieved from www.cios.org/www/ejc/sandbox///Scarduzio%20andMalvini%20Redden%20-%20negative%20emotional%20displays.html
- Sinclair, A. (2010). Placing self: How might we place ourselves in leadership studies differently? *Leadership*, 6(4), 447–60.
- Sinclair, A. (2011). Leading with body. In E. Jeanes, D. Knights & P. Y. Martin (Eds.), *Handbook of Gender, Work, and Organization*. Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Sluss, D. M., Ployhart, R. E., Cobb, M. G., & Ashforth, B. E. (2012). Generalizing newcomers' relational and organizational identifications: Processes and prototypicality. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(4), 949–75.

- Southgate, E., & Shying, K. (2014). Researchers as dirty workers: Cautionary tales on insider-outsider dynamics. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 9(3), 223–40.
- Stanczak, G. C. (2007). *Visual Research Methods: Image, Society, and Representation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stocco, A., Fum, D. (2007). Implicit emotional biases in decision-making: The case of the Iowa Gambling Task. *Brain and Cognition*, 66(3), 253–9.
- Thiel, C. E., Bagdasarov, Z., Harkrider, L., Johnson, J. F., & Mumford, M. D. (2012). Leader ethical decision-making in organizations: Strategies for sensemaking. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 107(1), 49–64.
- Todres, L., & Holloway, I. (2004). Descriptive phenomenology. In F. Rapport (Ed.), *New Qualitative Methodologies in Health and Social Care Research*, pp. 79–98. London: Routledge.
- Tracy, S. J. (2004). The construction of correctional officers: Emotionality behind bars. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(4), 509–33.
- Tracy, S. J. (2007). Taking the plunge: A contextual approach to problem-based research. *Communication Monographs*, 74(1), 106–11.
- Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight 'big-tent' criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10), 837–51.
- Tracy, S. J. (2012). The toxic and mythical combination of deductive writing logic for inductive qualitative research. *Qualitative Communication Research*, 1(1), 109–42.
- Tracy, S. J., Myers, K. K., & Scott, C. W. (2006). Cracking jokes and crafting selves: Sense-making and identity management among human service workers. *Communication Monographs*, 73(3), 283–308.
- Tracy, S. J., & Rivera, K. D. (2010). Endorsing equity and applauding stay-at-home moms: How male voices on work-life reveal aversive sexism and flickers of transformation. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 24(3), 3–43.
- van Maanen, J. (1988). *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.
- Vreeke, G. J., & van der Mark, I. L. (2003). Empathy: An integrative model. *New Ideas in Psychology*, 21(3), 177–207.
- Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in Organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Weick, K. E. (2001). *Making Sense of the Organization*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Weick, K. E., Sutcliffe, K. M., & Obstfeld, D. (2005). Organizing and the process of sensemaking. *Organization Science*, 16(4), 409–21.
- Widdowfield, R. (2000). The place of emotions in academic research. *AREA*, 32(2), 199–208.
- Woodthorpe, K. (2007). My life after death: Connecting the field, the findings and the feelings. *Anthropology Matters Journal*, 9(1), 1–10.

Pattern Matching in Qualitative Analysis

Noemi Sinkovics

THE IMPORTANCE OF PATTERN MATCHING FOR BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES

Hodgkinson and Starkey (2011, p. 364) note that researchers in business and management studies (BMS) need to ‘re-evaluate their conceptual and methodological armoury in order to ensure the field continues to be both scholarly and relevant to a diverse array of constituents’. Although this statement is equally relevant for both quantitative and qualitative research, the latter is more prone to criticism due to its inherent messiness and complexity (cf. Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012). Furthermore, there are epistemological disputes about the extent to which it is possible for constituents (fellow researchers, practitioners, policy makers, etc.) to interpret the presented data in the same way and arrive at the same conclusions as the investigator(s) of the presented qualitative research. This makes the creation of guidelines/criteria for the design and evaluation of qualitative

studies challenging (cf. Hammersley, 2007; Johnson et al., 2007).

To this end, pattern matching can be tremendously helpful at various levels. First and foremost, it aims at externalising implicit mental models and assumptions as much as possible. This helps the readers of the qualitative piece of work to retrace the thought processes of the investigators and to better understand how and why they arrived at the presented conclusions. Second, pattern matching requires meticulous contextualisation, clear-cut theoretical formulation, as well as detailed and precise operationalisation. While it is not possible to identify and externalise every aspect of our mental models, the concious application of pattern matching will improve the way researchers go about the design, implementation and write-up of studies that satisfy the double hurdle of rigour and relevance (cf. Pettigrew, 2001).

Fundamentally, pattern matching involves the comparison of a predicted theoretical pattern with an observed empirical pattern. The underlying assumption is that human beings

make sense of the world by comparing what they observe externally with internal mental models (Hammond, 1966a). As a consequence, even in cases where the pattern match is not made explicit, it is still present to a certain degree. At the same time, the purposeful application of the pattern-matching logic will result in a more rigorous and structured research process and write-up as it requires systematic planning, including as much advance conceptualisation work as possible and detailed documentation throughout the entire project. While the idea of pattern matching originates from a quantitative tradition, the application of its principles does not necessarily require the use of statistics (cf. Ghauri, 2004). In this chapter, the focus is on the demonstration of how pattern-matching principles can be used in the design and implementation of qualitative research.

The intended contribution is twofold. First, the chapter aims at providing readers with an in-depth understanding of how this idea emerged and developed over time. In order to achieve this goal, a brief but detailed overview of the historical and philosophical roots of pattern matching will be given followed by an elaboration of the general logic of pattern matching. The latter is meant to offer the reader some guidance regarding what he/she should consider when consciously applying the principles of pattern matching in a study. Second, the chapter goes beyond the existing literature on the application of pattern matching in qualitative BMS. This is done by the classification of pattern-matching applications in three categories according to the degree of the pattern match. They are labelled 'full pattern matching', 'flexible pattern matching' and 'partial pattern matching'. For each category a detailed example from a published study will be provided.

THE HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS OF PATTERN MATCHING

The concept of pattern matching originates from the field of psychology. From a

meta-theoretical perspective (cf. Burrell & Morgan, 1979) it can be traced back to Egon Brunswik's probabilistic functionalism (cf. Hammond, 1966b). Brunswik was one of the influential yet controversial figures in what Koch (1959) calls the Age of Theory, or as postmodern researchers tend to refer to it, the age of modernity (cf. Kvale, 1992). The central theme of this period was the attempt to build a science of (hu)man and behaviour (cf. Wolfe, 1959). There are four key characteristics that need to be mentioned when explaining the background against which the idea of pattern matching emerged. In the Age of Theory, there was a pursuit of extrinsic legitimation and an attempt to emulate the natural sciences. This, at times, led to an emphasis of institutionalisation and method over the quality of the content and relevance of research problems (Koch, 1959). A quest for universality manifested itself in an attempt to create law-like generalisations. The dominant research design of the period was the laboratory experiment that involved hypothetical-deductive reasoning and the correlation of linear variables. The emphasis was on prediction and control. Last, in the Age of Theory there was a general belief in the commensurability of theories (cf. Koch, 1959; Kvale, 1992).

The controversy surrounding Brunswik was a response to his deviation from the functionalism of his time as sketched out above. While he still believed in the existence of a universal truth, he posited that human beings' comprehension of that universal truth is merely probabilistic in nature (Hammond, 1966a). This proposition is believed to have been influenced by his early experience of studying history in school. Egon Brunswik was born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1903. As a bilingual child, he received his history education in both Hungarian and German. He very soon noticed inconsistencies in the way the same event was recounted in the respective languages. The deviation in the accounts triggered his initial insights into the probabilistic nature of a person's

knowledge of their environment. His psychological and scientific interests in later life were centred around perception, reasoning, probabilism, functionalism and the historical development of psychology (Tolman, 1966). Brunswik's psychology focuses on the adaptive interrelationships between organisms and their environment.

In his writings, Brunswik emphasises the equivocal nature of cues that results in an ambiguity in the relationship between cause and effect. He postulates that because of this ambiguity, the relationship between the observed cue and the real object should be described in terms that allow the quantitative measurement of the degree of the relationship. He calls this the ecological validity of the cue. In other words, he theorises that because the environment is only partially accessible to human beings, environmental cues can be interpreted in different ways. Put differently, when observers attempt to explain/interpret an observed event/object, they can merely collect sensory cues that are scattered in the environment. These sensory cues are then recombined by the observer and form a probabilistic explanation. Furthermore, the way the observer picks up sensory cues, and how he/she interprets them, is path-dependent; that is, it is influenced by past experience and the amount of available information. For example, the same managerial behaviour may be interpreted by different observing researchers in different ways, depending on their familiarity with particular bodies of literature, practical experience, methodological background, etc.

In his methodological system, Brunswik stresses the importance of studying the context/environment, and the use of statistics. He furthermore emphasises the representative design of experiments. The resulting probabilistic functionalism can be described as an attempt to describe behavioural phenomena in statistical terms in order to provide an adequate level of understanding with respect to variance and invariance (Hammond, 1966a). The coining of the

term 'pattern matching' itself is most commonly attributed to Donald T. Campbell (e.g. Chen, 2015; Trochim, 1985). By building on Brunswik's work, Campbell (1966) investigates the question of how knowledge of external objects and events is achieved if we accept that 'instances of valid knowing and of mistake both occur and are in some instance discriminable' (p. 81). He proposes that this happens through the process of pattern matching. To underpin this proposition, Campbell (1966) draws on examples from engineering, astronomy, and computer science, and on the work of scholars emphasising the importance of analogy in scientific thought (cf. Oppenheimer, 1956). He furthermore argues that because scientific theories aim at explaining objects that are external (distal) to the theorist, and because all knowledge is indirect, pattern matching happens at many stages and iteratively.

Moreover, there are two patterns to be compared, one of which is a pattern of theory and the other a pattern of data. It needs to be noted that while each pattern (i.e. theoretical and data patterns) is informed by the other, theory is not a summary of data. From this, it follows that in order for a theory to be testable, it needs to be separable from data (Campbell, 1966).

In the decades that followed the publication of Campbell's (1966) article, 'pattern matching', both as a logic and a technique, was picked up by other fields, such as computer science (e.g. Jackson, 1991), operational research (e.g. Amintoosi et al., 2007), urban planning (e.g. Zeiss & Lefsrud, 1995), and more. At the same time, it continued to retain its relevance in the field of psychology (e.g. Geisler & Super, 2000; Waters et al., 1997). For BMS (cf. Ghauri, 2004; Yin, 2009), the most relevant strand of pattern-matching-related literature comes from the applied field of programme evaluation (e.g. Marquart, 1989, 1990). The next section will briefly introduce the general principles of pattern matching, also known as the theory of pattern matching (Trochim, 1989).

THE GENERAL LOGIC OF PATTERN MATCHING

Trochim (1989, p. 356) defines a pattern as any arrangement of objects or entities. He uses the term arrangement to indicate that patterns are non-random and, to a certain extent, describable. He furthermore proposes that pattern-matching principles permeate all types and levels of research activities, even if they are not consciously recognised. At the same time, even though all theories imply some patterns, theories do not equal patterns. As theories generally propose predictions, pattern matching involves an attempt to link a predicted pattern that is derived from theory, with an observed pattern. As a consequence, the process of pattern matching can be divided into two realms, that is, a theoretical realm and an observational realm (Trochim, 1985, 1989). The left side of Figure 28.1 represents the general logic of pattern matching.

However, as outlined in the previous section, the underlying assumption is that we cannot fully equate what we observe with an

objective reality. For this reason, the pattern match is not simply performed between theories and facts, but between different levels of theories (cf. Lakatos, 1970; Wible & Sedgley, 1999). It needs to be noted that in this context, the term ‘theory’ is, mostly but not exclusively, employed in the broader sense of the word; namely, ‘an idea used to account for a situation or justify a course of action’ (*Oxford English Dictionary*). The left side of Figure 28.1 also provides an illustration of these different levels of theories. The theoretical realm contains an initial theorising process, and the definition and construction of an expected theoretical pattern. This initial theorising process may have many sources (Trochim, 1989). It may come from a formal process of theorising (e.g. Weick, 1989), it might be based on the ideas or hunches of the investigator (Trochim, 1989) and/or on the perspectives of stakeholders of the investigated phenomenon (Marquart, 1990), or it might be a combination of these. The general purpose of this stage is to make implicit mental models as explicit as possible.

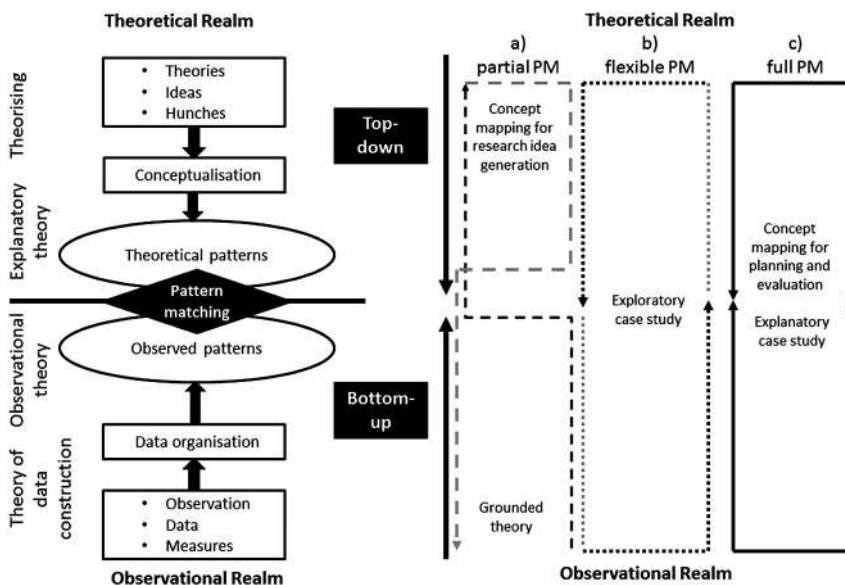


Figure 28.1 Different degrees of pattern matching in qualitative (and mixed) research

Source: adapted from Trochim (1989) and Wible and Sedgley (1999)

The next step involves the translation of these initial theoretical ideas into specifiable theoretical patterns. There are many ways of conceptualising theoretical patterns. They can be presented in verbal, mathematical, pictorial or any other form. Notwithstanding, in BMS the verbal form is the most common presentation form. In Figure 28.1, this stage is referred to as explanatory theory construction. Depending on the context of application, the purpose of this phase is to supply a tentative explanation for expected observations. This explanation can take the form of alternative theories, propositions, hypotheses, etc. In this conceptualisation process, the researcher also needs to decide on the level of generalisation that should be achieved (Trochim, 1985, 1989; Trochim and Linton, 1986). Examples of different levels of generalisation include a specific case in a narrow context (e.g. managerial decisions in a specific firm), a specific case in a broader context (e.g. managerial decisions of a specific organisation in response to an industry event or government policy), or a phenomenon, behaviour, etc. in general (e.g. managerial decision-making in general) (cf. Trochim, 1989).

The empirical counterpart of the theoretical realm is the observational realm. In this part of the process, we can distinguish between two levels of theory. A theory of data construction should describe in detail the type of raw data that is relevant, how it should be collected and how it should subsequently be prepared/manipulated for analysis. The empirical data can come from many sources, such as observations, field notes, interviews, documents, surveys, etc. (Trochim, 1985, 1989). In addition, an observational theory should lay out how one would construct appropriate and believable inferences on the basis of the data. This includes the construction of an analytical framework and the specification of how this framework will make sense of the data (cf. Wible & Sedgley, 1999). These four levels of theory form the foundation on the basis of which the pattern match is performed. The observed pattern is compared to the predicted pattern in order for the relevance and

potential validity of the mental model/theory to be gauged (cf. Trochim, 1989). The next section is dedicated to the explication of the right side of Figure 28.1, with examples included.

PATTERN-MATCHING APPLICATIONS AND EXAMPLES

One can distinguish between three broad categories of pattern-matching applications in BMS. The right side of Figure 28.1 provides a graphical overview. The rest of this section will introduce each of the categories in more depth, including detailed examples.

Full Pattern Matching

Category (c) in Figure 28.1 is dubbed ‘full pattern matching’ and contains methods that embody all stages of the general pattern-matching process (represented by the bold arrows), namely, initial theorising, conceptualising, defining and specifying theoretical patterns, and the matching of expected patterns with the observed data patterns (cf. Trochim, 1989). This category is best suited to investigations whose goal is to examine causal relationships and build explanations. The emphasis is on a very rigorous research design, with as much conceptualisation and operationalisation prior to data collection as possible. In order to establish causality and the validity of that causality, researchers are required to construct alternative explanations before data collection is carried out. Category (c) in Figure 28.1 shows two application examples for this type of pattern matching. The first example is the original pattern-matching technique developed by Trochim (1989) for the purpose of programme evaluation.

This particular technique combines qualitative and quantitative methods to create concept maps based on multidimensional scaling. These maps are subsequently used to derive specific conceptualisations and

operationalisations for the evaluation of programmes and/or interventions/policies (Kane & Trochim, 2007; Trochim, 1985; Trochim & Linton, 1986). In its essence, this form of pattern matching does not differ from traditional hypothesis-testing and model building (Trochim, 1989). The main difference between Trochim's (1989) technique and more traditional hypothesis-testing methods, such as the t-test and ANOVA, is that the former can handle a larger degree of complexity and treats the observations from a multivariate perspective (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). However, as the purpose of this chapter is to introduce how the pattern-matching logic can be used more broadly in qualitative analysis, this specific technique will not be considered in any more detail here. For a full description and practical demonstration of how concept mapping for planning and evaluation works, the reader is referred to Kane and Trochim's (2007) book on the subject, in the Applied Social Research Methods series. For more information about how the pattern-matching

logic is applied in quantitative research, for example, in the form of structural equation modelling, the reader is advised to refer to the book *Research Methods Knowledge Base* by Trochim and Donnelly (2008).

The second example of an application for this pattern-matching category is the multiple explanatory case study (cf. Yin, 2009). Figure 28.2 demonstrates the parallels between the general theory of pattern matching and the characteristics of Yin's (2009) explanatory case study design.

A very good published example of a piece of multiple explanatory case study research that applies the principles of pattern matching is that by Yin and Moore (1988). Their research focused on the explanation of what research-funding organisations and researchers can do in order to enhance the practical utilisation of research outputs. The context of the study was specified as the natural hazards field. The authors set out to answer the following two research questions: (1) 'What explains why the results of research have been utilised

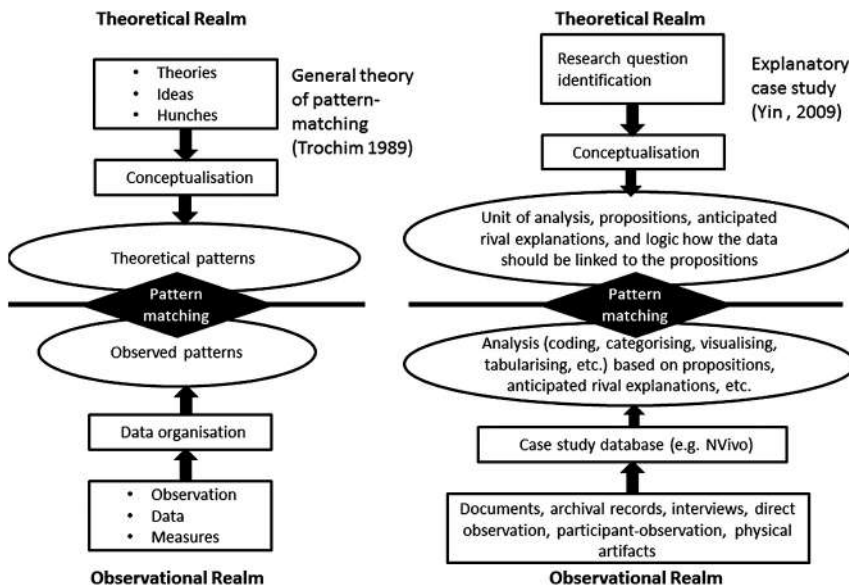


Figure 28.2 The general logic of pattern matching and its application in explanatory case study design

Source: adapted from Trochim (1989)

in the past?’ and (2) ‘Do the explanations suggest how research utilisation might be effectively promoted in the future?’ (Yin & Moore, 1988, p. 26). Given that there were three alternative theories in existence that could have explained why practitioners used scientific research, there was no need for additional theorising. The theories in question were the knowledge-driven theory, the problem-solving theory and the social-interaction theory.

The authors specified critical conditions for determining the validity of these three theories. For example, the knowledge-driven theory stipulates that the diffusion of scientific knowledge is a linear process that starts with basic research, gradually develops into applied research, and eventually results in the design of commercial products and services. From this the following critical conditions can be derived: the project should be built on prior basic research; the research should be entirely defined by the researcher; the research results should represent a contribution to knowledge in the form of academic publications; and the research should result in a commercialisable product.

The unit of analysis was defined as the research project. The authors selected nine cases based on three criteria: (1) the utilisation outcome was known; (2) the research project was based in the physical or social sciences, or in architecture; (3) it was a high-quality project. There was a rigorous nomination process in which high-profile stakeholders nominated 66 projects in total. Based on a selection protocol, the authors narrowed the number of cases down to nine. The data collection was guided by a field protocol and comprised project site visits, interviews and project documents. The analytical framework consisted of five categories based on different utilisation outcomes: (1) practice, decision-making and enlightenment use; (2) decision-making and enlightenment use; (3) practice and decision-making use; (4) enlightenment use only; and (5) minimal or no use. The authors then provided a detailed description of the cases within each of these

five categories by drawing on the dimensions previously specified, to aid the judging of the validity of the three alternative theories.

The results of the analysis indicated that the best explanation for research use was provided by the social-interaction theory. Furthermore, a number of recommendations were derived from the case studies for improving practitioners’ utilisation of research.

Flexible Pattern Matching

Category (b) in Figure 28.1 is labelled ‘flexible pattern matching’. It includes techniques that provide greater flexibility for the matching of theoretical and observational patterns. Flexible pattern matching is most suited for exploratory research designs. While there is an initial definition of research questions, and preferably an a priori specification of a tentative analytical framework or initial template (cf. King, 2014; Yin, 2009), this translates into more basic theoretical patterns than in the case of an explanatory case study design. The emphasis is on exploration and theory building based on the patterns that emerge from the collected data (cf. Eisenhardt, 1989). The constructs/dimensions/patterns specified a priori mostly constitute an initial tentative analytical framework aimed at providing guidance and some focus for the explorations. It is important to keep in mind that both the research question(s) and the constructs/dimensions could shift by the end of the study. Propositions and hypotheses emerge from the analysis of the cases, and their validity is ascertained through replication logic. Subsequently, the emerging constructs, concepts and theories are compared with the existing literature. A further test of the theory’s internal validity consists of identifying conflicting and corroborating findings from the existing literature (cf. Eisenhardt, 1989). A further example of a category (b) type of pattern-matching logic is template analysis (King, 2014). Template analysis can be used

on its own for the analysis of qualitative data, or nested into an exploratory case study design. In the latter instance, it is a very useful tool for providing an initial set of *a priori* constructs. The nodes for the initial template are most commonly derived from the existing literature.

A published example of flexible pattern matching that uses nested template analysis within an exploratory multiple case study design is provided by Sinkovics et al. (2014). The authors set out to investigate the relationship between bottom-of-the-pyramid (BOP) business models and social value creation. The focus is on how BOP firms themselves use their business models to simultaneously create commercial and social value. The explicit research questions are the following: (1) In the BOP context, what are the factors that influence whether social value creation is an objective of business formation? (2) In the BOP context, how is social value creation related to business model formulation and dynamics?

The authors frame these research questions through a literature review that synthesises the literature on the relationship between social value creation and business activities. An overarching theme that emerges from the literature is that enterprises that have social value creation as their main objective face a certain degree of conflict between the social and commercial dimensions of their business model (McDonald, 2007). However, Sinkovics et al. (2014) argue that the truth value of this statement may vary across contexts. More specifically, they propose that the meaning of social value may differ greatly across economies, according to the extent of economic development. Furthermore, they argue that it is not possible to create a sustainable business at the BOP, without engaging with BOP consumers, producers, entrepreneurs and employees.

This research framing sets the context at the BOP. The authors then delineate three main conceptual building blocks (patterns) that they go on to explore in the cases. The first building block is the business model. The case firms' business models are explored

through the following 12 dimensions: customer segment, key resources, key partners/supporters, key activities, value proposition, clients/customers, competitors, channels, cost, revenue, change in offering over time and change in strategy over time. The second building block is the constraint concept. The underlying assumption is that for any business to survive, it needs to be able to identify and respond to the main constraints it faces. By identifying three studies that list known constraints in developing countries (Chowdhury, 2007; Dahan et al., 2010; London et al., 2010), the authors put together an initial template of constraints that a BOP business could face. This initial constraint template consists of 19 types of constraints, subsumed under two main categories, namely, productivity/value creation constraints and transactional/value capture constraints. The third conceptual building block is the social value concept. Sinkovics et al. (2014) use the three core values of development (i.e. sustenance, self-esteem and freedom from servitude) listed by Todaro and Smith (2011) to operationalise social value creation.

The selection criteria for the cases are the impact of the business on the local community and the sustainability of the enterprise. The data were collected in the form of face-to-face interviews and secondary material where available. The findings confirm the proposition that the meaning of social value is context-dependent. Due to space limitations, it is not possible to demonstrate the flexible pattern-matching process and outcomes for all three conceptual building blocks here. However, to provide an example, Table 28.1 illustrates the pattern-matching outcomes for the constraint dimension. The initial template columns give an overview of the dimensions that were derived from the literature prior to the data analysis. The final template columns show both instances of the data matching the initially predicted dimensions and instances of new dimensions emerging from the data. Table 28.1 also shows that, in addition to new dimensions in the initial two categories, an

Table 28.1 A demonstration of flexible pattern matching through template analysis

Productivity/value creation constraints			Transactional/value capture constraints		Trigger constraints
Initial template	Final template	Initial template	Final template	No initial template, merged from data	
Production input resources	Production input resources	Market access	Market access	Changed industry conditions	
lack of access to high-quality input material (London et al. 2010)	lack of access to high-quality input material (London et al. 2010)	poor infrastructure (roads, communication networks, transportation system) (London et al. 2010; Chowdhury 2007)	poor infrastructure (roads, communication networks, transportation system) (London et al. 2010; Chowdhury 2007)	(e.g. diminishing competitive advantage)	
low quality of local materials (London et al. 2010)	low quality of local materials (London et al. 2010) supplier power (price, quantity)	lack of awareness of market expectations (London et al. 2010) inability to meet market expectations (London et al. 2010; Chowdhury 2007)	lack of awareness of market expectations (London et al. 2010) inability to meet market expectations (London et al. 2010; Chowdhury 2007)	Act of God (e.g. drought)	
Financial resources	Financial resources			Socio-cultural factors	
lack of working and investment capital (London et al. 2010; Chowdhury 2007; Dahan et al. 2010)	investment capital (London et al. 2010; Chowdhury 2007; Dahan et al. 2010)		lack of awareness in the (domestic/ international) market about company's products/services export barriers	(e.g. unemployment due to immobility)	
exploitation by extra-legal lenders (e.g. loan sharks) (London et al. 2010)	exploitation by extra-legal lenders (e.g. loan sharks) (London et al. 2010)		market scepticism	Social constraints	
no access to insurance (London et al. 2010)	no access to insurance (London et al. 2010)		community acceptance/legitimacy	(e.g. injustice, exploitation, lack of employment opportunities)	
Production resources	Production resources	Market power	Market power		
inadequate or lacking technology/ equipment/infrastructure (e.g. electricity, broadband, water) (London et al. 2010; Chowdhury 2007)	inadequate or lacking technology/ equipment/infrastructure (e.g. electricity, broadband, water) (London et al. 2010; Chowdhury 2007)	lack of capacity to link directly with buyers (London et al. 2010; Dahan et al. 2010)	lack of capacity to link directly with buyers (London et al. 2010; Dahan et al. 2010)		

lack of expertise/know-how/education (technical, business, industry-related) (London et al. 2010; Chowdhury 2007)	lack of expertise/know-how/education (technical, business, industry-related) (London et al. 2010; Chowdhury 2007)	lack of direct access to end markets (London et al. 2010)	lack of direct access to end markets (London et al. 2010)
storage space (London et al. 2010)	storage space (London et al. 2010)	exploitation by middlemen (London et al. 2010)	exploitation by middlemen (London et al. 2010)
underdeveloped human resources (Dahan et al. 2010)	underdeveloped human resources (Dahan et al. 2010)	Market security	Market security
		lack of consistent buyers (London et al. 2010)	lack of consistent buyers (London et al. 2010)
		price fluctuation (London et al. 2010)	price fluctuation (London et al. 2010)
		bureaucracy, corruption (Chowdhury 2007)	bureaucracy, corruption (Chowdhury 2007)
		Law-and-order situation, strikes, lack of government assistance (Chowdhury 2007)	Law-and-order situation, strikes, lack of government assistance (Chowdhury 2007)

Source: adapted from Sinkovics, Sinkovics, and Yamin (2014: 700)

entirely new category of constraints emerged from the data. The authors term this new category ‘trigger constraints’, defined as ‘limitations the entrepreneur as an individual, a particular community, or society as a whole is facing’ (Sinkovics et al., 2014, p. 698). Two of the five case firms started their businesses as a response to such trigger constraints. This finding has significant theoretical implications for theorising about the formation of BOP businesses in general and about entrepreneurial businesses in particular. In addition to a number of summary tables, the investigators also provide detailed descriptions of the cases based on the pre-defined dimensions.

Partial Pattern Matching

The first category in Figure 28.1, denominated with the letter (a), is named ‘partial pattern matching’. It can be divided into a top-down and a bottom-up approach to initial theorising. Both approaches aim at engaging

the investigator’s mental models in the theorising process, but from different perspectives. The bottom-up approach is based on an inductive process and builds on empirical observations and data. Grounded theory is a good example (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) because it starts out in the observational realm, and the patterns that emerge from the empirical data are used to formulate propositions/hypotheses for further exploration or testing in a subsequent study. However, due to space limitations, it is not possible to include a published example of a grounded-theory-based partial pattern-matching study, here. Instead, the rest of this section will be dedicated to providing a detailed outline of the top-down approach, including an illustration.

Top-down pattern work is carried out in the theoretical realm and constitutes a potential starting point for the full-fledged pattern-matching process. A good example of this approach is bibliometric concept mapping for theorising (see Figure 28.3). This builds on the interplay between existing literature and the researcher’s

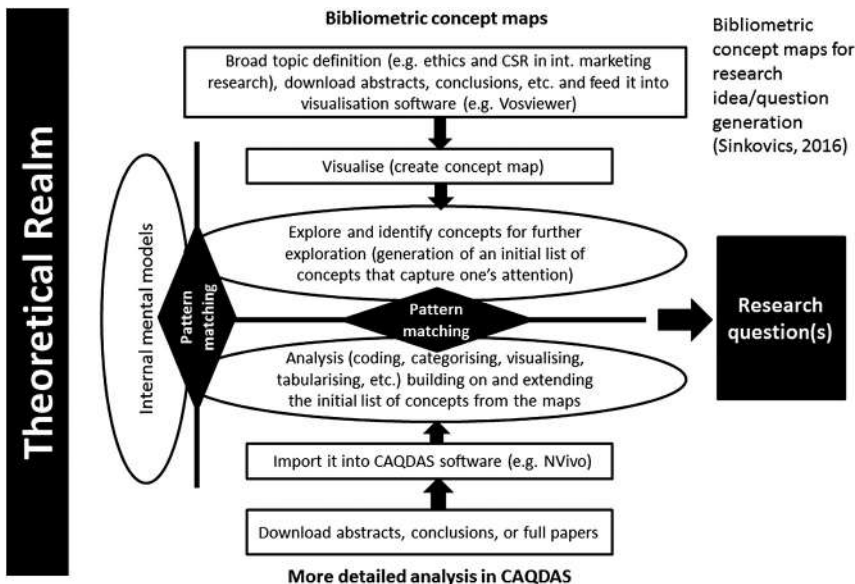


Figure 28.3 The logic of pattern matching in bibliometric concept mapping for initial theorizing

Source: adapted from Sinkovics (2016)

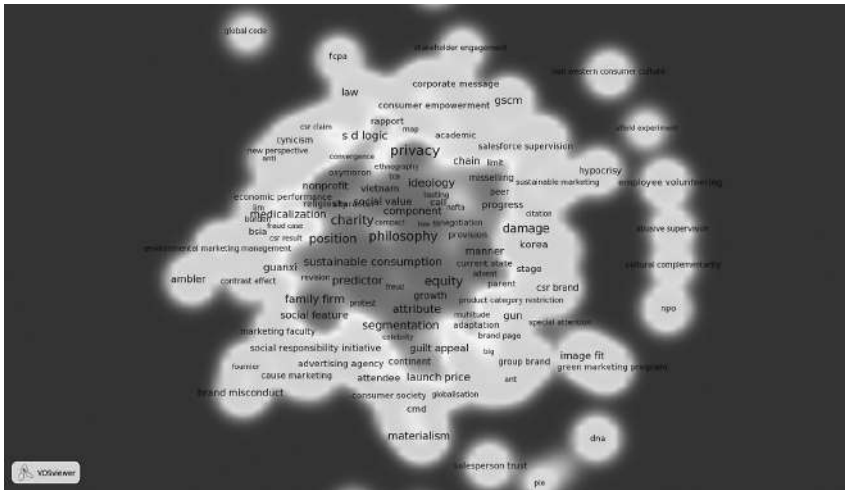


Figure 28.4 Bibliometric concept map displaying 6000 concepts

Source: Sinkovics (2016)

internal, to a certain degree implicit, mental models. This is done through the visualisation of bodies of literature for the purpose of identifying interesting research avenues/ideas based on observed patterns in the concept maps. Figure 28.4 illustrates a bibliometric concept map of 410 article abstracts (Sinkovics, 2016). This method is especially useful in cases of researchers searching for new research ideas or wanting to familiarise themselves with an unfamiliar body of literature (cf. Sinkovics, 2013, 2016). The most important idea behind bibliometric mapping as a tool for idea generation can be derived from Weick's (1989) proposition that the feeling that something is interesting represents the beginning of an externalisation process. This process consists of the recognition and verbalisation of one's own implicit assumptions, which are most frequently also anchored in or influenced by the assumptions of a discipline. The use of bibliometric concept maps fulfils a similar conceptualisation purpose to that of Trochim's (1985) initial concept maps that are generated from stakeholder consultation and brainstorming.

Before the study by Sinkovics (2016) can be introduced as an example, there is a need to go into more detail about bibliometric

concept maps. They can be created from titles, abstracts and keywords of published articles. It is also possible to include conclusions and future research sections of academic papers, although this would require considerable additional effort. The main purpose of concept maps is to visualise keyword co-occurrences, showing which keywords are most likely to occur together in a specific body of literature. Put differently, the number of co-occurrences of two keywords is the number of publications in which both keywords occur together. The distance between two keywords on the map approximately indicates their relatedness (van Eck & Waltman, 2014). For example, a keyword map based on management articles is very likely to display the words 'firm performance' and 'management capability' in close proximity to each other, indicating a relationship between the two concepts.

Bibliometric concept maps can be generated using a variety of software tools. The author's preferred software is the freely available VOSviewer (www.vosviewer.com) due to its user friendliness, flexibility and the fact that it produces very high-quality visualisation outputs. The VOSviewer software

operates based on the VOS (visualisation of similarities) mapping technique and can be used to generate maps based on both text corpus and networks. Van Eck and Waltman (2010) provide an in-depth review of the software for the interested reader. To create bibliometric term/concept maps from selected articles, their titles, abstracts and keywords need to be downloaded from the Web of Science™ database (or from an alternative database such as Scopus) into a text file.

After the visualisation has been carried out, VOSviewer provides users with two ways to display the concepts: network visualisation and density visualisation. The network visualisation option uses importance as the main criterion for highlighting concepts. The font size of the label and the size of the circle are representative of the importance of the concept. The colour of the circle helps users identify the cluster to which a concept belongs. However, displaying all the concepts would make the maps difficult to read. For this reason, only a subset of labels is represented on the map. The researcher can then use the zoom function to explore the map in more detail. The density visualisation view highlights the importance of areas on the concept map based on the number of connected items. From within this view, the user can also opt for the cluster density view that assigns individual concepts to clusters and visualises their densities. Clusters help the investigator to identify major themes in a specific body of literature. When creating concept maps from texts, one can choose between binary counting and full counting. Binary counting only takes into account the presence or absence of a term in or from a document and is not concerned with how frequently a concept is mentioned within a document. In contrast, the full counting option considers all the occurrences (Sinkovics, 2016).

In the article 'Enhancing the foundations for theorising through bibliometric mapping', Sinkovics (2016) sets out to achieve two objectives. First, the paper aims at introducing the technique of bibliometric concept

mapping and demonstrating how it can be used to visualise a fairly large body of literature. Second, the author demonstrates how bibliometric concept maps can be used as a starting point for more in-depth explorations with the help of a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) package. Although the author chose NVivo, any other software capable of performing similar functions would be suitable. For more operational details about NVivo, the reader is advised to refer to the QSR International website (www.qsrinternational.com) and to dedicated manuals (e.g. Richards, 1999).

The main research questions in the paper were the following: (1) How are ethics and related issues represented in the marketing literature? (2) Which potential future research avenues can be derived from this body of literature? The initial search strategy in the Web of Science™ database consisted of terms such as corporate social responsibility (CSR), human rights, ethics and ethical. The first search resulted in 14,747 peer-reviewed journal papers. To reduce the number of journal articles and to increase the relevance of the hits, the search was subsequently limited to marketing and international marketing journals. This narrower search strategy yielded 410 articles. The titles and abstracts were exported to EndNote (reference manager software) and to a text file.

The next step involved the visualisation of the concepts extracted from the 410 abstracts. If the purpose is to gain a general understanding of what the main themes are in a body of literature, the minimum threshold for occurrences and the number of clusters should be set such that the number of generalisations is manageable. In Sinkovics' (2016) study, the threshold for occurrences was set at two and the number of clusters was left at the default setting. This yielded a concept map of 846 concepts and 17 clusters. In contrast, if the purpose of the exploration is to look at concepts as widely as possible, the number of occurrences can be set at one, which will yield a very large map. In this case, this

setting resulted in a map consisting of 6,000 concepts. Figure 28.4 shows the large concept map displaying 6,000 concepts from Sinkovics' (2016) study. Smaller maps are very useful for identifying general trends, whereas large maps are an excellent tool for brainstorming and spotting interesting concepts. Figure 28.6 shows the network visualisation of the 846 concepts.

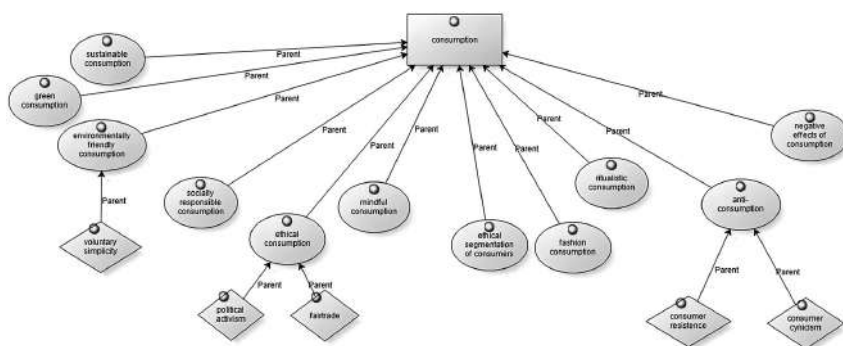
In the next step, all the concepts that were perceived by the investigator as 'interesting' were compiled into a list that represented the initial template for the textual analysis. After the initial template was created, by zooming in and out in the concept map, the full abstracts of the 410 journal articles, including their bibliographic information, were imported into NVivo for further analysis. The initial template included concepts such as 'abusive supervision', 'mindful consumption', 'corporate social irresponsibility', 'corporate hypocrisy', etc. The concept of 'mindful consumption', for example, led to a more in-depth investigation of all the abstracts that mentioned consumption. This further investigation yielded the following collection of concepts (for a graphical representation refer to Figure 28.5): sustainable consumption, green consumption, environmentally friendly consumption, socially responsible consumption, ethical consumption, mindful consumption, fashion consumption, ritualistic consumption, negative effects of consumption, anti-consumption, consumer resistance, consumer cynicism, ethical segmentation of consumption, political activism, Fairtrade and voluntary simplicity.

The analysis furthermore uncovered a potential relationship between consumer cynicism, consumer resistance and anti-consumption. There also seems to be a relationship between environmentally friendly consumption and voluntary simplicity. Moreover, political activism and Fairtrade emerged in connection with ethical consumption. Based on these concepts and relationships one could immediately formulate basic research questions and propositions for

further investigation. For instance, one might ask the following questions: What are the drivers of ethical consumption? What types of ethical consumption are there? Are certain consumer groups more likely to become ethical consumers than others? For additional possible research questions around ethical consumption, and for a more detailed step-by-step guide to carrying out the analysis, the reader is referred to the original article (Sinkovics 2016). In terms of propositions, one might formulate the following basic ones: the more visible the negative effects of consumption become, the more consumers will adopt ethical consumption practices; the more mindful consumers are, the more likely they are to engage in voluntary simplicity.

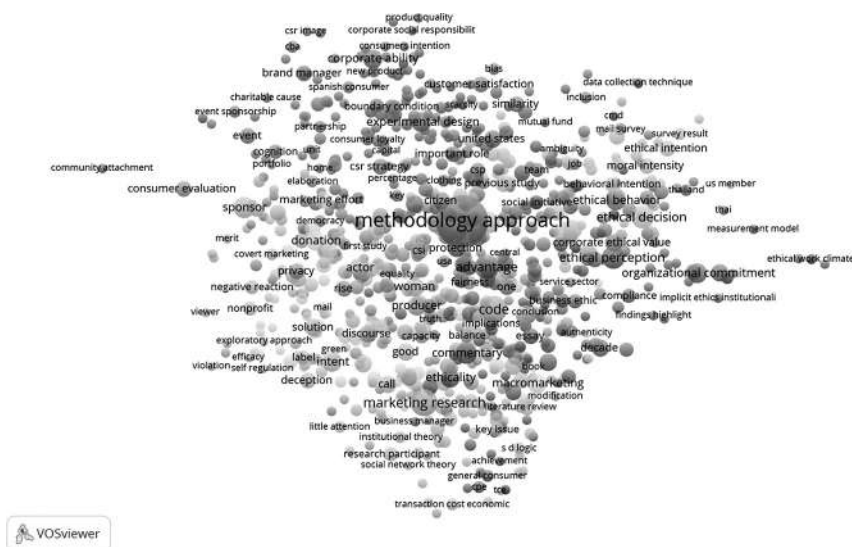
As can be seen from Figure 28.3 above, pattern matching occurs at two levels. The first-level pattern match takes place between the researcher's mental model (a combination of his/her past experiences, academic training, beliefs, values, etc.) and the observed patterns that emerge from the bibliometric concept map. For example, following on from the previous example, the investigator may hold the assumption that consumers are more likely to engage in purchase behaviour that is convenient to them, even if they do not agree with the negative environmental and/or social implications of the production process. This is also well documented in the literature, and is known as the attitude-behaviour gap (cf. Papaoikonomou et al., 2011). The concept of 'voluntary simplicity' that emerged from the concept map challenged this assumption, leading to the following question: Under which circumstances are attitudes translated into action?

The second level of pattern matching follows on from this point. In the first instance, the investigator's assumption about consumer behaviour was challenged (consumers prioritise convenience over ethics), leading to the formulation of a new research question (regarding what drives voluntary simplicity) and possible propositions (e.g. that the more mindful consumers are, the more likely they



Source: Sinkovics (2016)

articles). If there was a documented relationship, one could then read the full paper, do additional literature searches and determine whether there was a need for further research. If there was no documented relationship between the concepts in the NVivo database, one could do a wider literature search in the Web of Science™, ProQuest, Scopus, etc. If the proposed relationship had not yet been explored, the investigator could start designing a study to examine the relationship. If the



Source: based on Sinkovics (2016)

relationship was already documented, one could determine the extent to which it had been investigated and design a subsequent study, if justifiable. To sum up, bibliometric concept maps serve as an aid to formulating initial research questions and/or propositions to be further explored in NVivo.

CONCLUSION

Understanding the basic principles of the pattern-matching logic, as well as its historical and philosophical roots, can be a tremendous help in designing and conducting qualitative research studies, regardless of the form they take. As mentioned at the beginning of this contribution, from a meta-theoretical point of view, the general theory of pattern matching originates from probabilistic functionalism (cf. Hammond, 1966b). This position between a strictly subjectivist and a strictly objectivist approach to social science (cf. Burrell & Morgan, 1979) gives pattern matching its unique structured flexibility. Being aware of the different types and levels of possible pattern matches can help researchers in their initial theorising, irrespective of their approach, that is, irrespective of whether they apply deductive, inductive or abductive reasoning. Moreover, a thorough understanding of the general logic of pattern matching will also enhance the quality of researchers' efforts in terms of conceptualisation, construct definition and operationalisation.

REFERENCES

- Amintoosi, Mahmood, Hadi Sadoghi Yazdi, Mahmood Fathy and Reza Monsefi (2007), 'Using pattern matching for tiling and packing problems', *European Journal of Operational Research*, 183(3), 950–60.
- Burrell, Gibson and Gareth Morgan (1979), *Sociological paradigms and organisational analysis: Elements of the sociology of corporate life*. London: Heinemann.
- Campbell, Donald T. (1966), 'Pattern matching as an essential in distal knowing', in *The psychology of Egon Brunswik*, Kenneth R. Hammond (Ed.). Austin, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 81–106.
- Chen, Huey-tsyh (2015), *Practical program evaluation: Theory-driven evaluation and the integrated evaluation perspective*. London: Sage.
- Chowdhury, Mohammed S. (2007), 'Overcoming entrepreneurship development constraints: The case of Bangladesh', *Journal of Enterprising Communities*, 1(3), 240–51.
- Dahan, Nicolas M., Jonathan P. Doh, Jennifer Oetzel and Michael Yaziji (2010), 'Corporate-NGO collaboration: Co-creating new business models for developing markets', *Long Range Planning*, 43(2), 326–42.
- Eisenhardt, Kathleen M. (1989), 'Building theories from case study research', *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 532–50.
- Geisler, Wilson S. and Boaz J. Super (2000), 'Perceptual organization of two-dimensional patterns', *Psychological Review*, 107(4), 677–708.
- Ghauri, Pervez N. (2004), 'Designing and conducting case studies in international business research', in *Handbook of qualitative research methods for international business*, Rebecca Marschan-Piekkari and Catherine Welch (Eds.). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 109–24.
- Glaser, Barney G. and Anselm L. Strauss (1967), *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago, IL: Aldine Pub. Co.
- Hammersley, Martyn (2007), 'The issue of quality in qualitative research', *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 30(3), 287–305.
- Hammond, Kenneth R. (1966a), 'Probabilistic functionalism: Egon Brunswik's integration of the history, theory, and method of psychology,' in *The psychology of Egon Brunswik*, Kenneth R. Hammond (Ed.). Austin, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 15–80.
- Hammond, Kenneth R. (Ed.) (1966b), *The psychology of Egon Brunswik*. Austin, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.
- Hodgkinson, Gerard P. and Ken Starkey (2011), 'Not simply returning to the same answer

- over and over again: Reframing relevance', *British Journal of Management*, 22(3), 355–69.
- Jackson, David (1991), 'Using software tools to automate the assessment of student programs,' *Computers & Education*, 17 (2), 133–143.
- Johnson, Phil, Anna Buehring, Catherine Cassell and Gillian Symon (2007), 'Defining qualitative management research: An empirical investigation', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 2(1), 23–42.
- Kane, Mary and William M. K. Trochim (2007), *Concept mapping for planning and evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- King, Nigel (2014), 'Using templates in the thematic analysis of texts', in *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research*, Catherine Cassell and Gillian Symon (Eds.). London: Sage.
- Koch, Sigmund (1959), 'Epilogue', in *Formulations of the person and the social context. Psychology: A study of a science*. Vol. 3. New York: McGraw-Hill, 729–88.
- Kvale, Steinar (1992), *Psychology and post-modernism*. London: Sage.
- Lakatos, Imre (1970), 'Falsification and the methodology of scientific research programmes', in *Criticism and the growth of knowledge*, Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (Eds.). Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 91–195.
- London, Ted, Ravi Anupindi and Sateen Sheth (2010), 'Creating mutual value: Lessons learned from ventures serving base of the pyramid producers', *Journal of Business Research*, 63(6), 582–94.
- Marquart, Jules M. (1989), 'A pattern-matching approach to assess the construct-validity of an evaluation instrument', *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 12(1), 37–43.
- Marquart, Jules M. (1990), 'A pattern-matching approach to link program theory and evaluation data', *New Directions for Program Evaluation*, 47, 93–107.
- McDonald, Robert E. (2007), 'An investigation of innovation in nonprofit organizations: The role of organizational mission', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 36(2), 256–81.
- Oppenheimer, Robert (1956), 'Analogy in science', *American Psychologist*, 11(3), 127–35.
- Papaoikonomou, Eleni, Gerard Ryan and Matias Ginieis (2011), 'Towards a holistic approach of the attitude behaviour gap in ethical consumer behaviours: Empirical evidence from Spain', *International Advances in Economic Research*, 17(1), 77–88.
- Pettigrew, Andrew M. (2001), 'Management research after modernism', *British Journal of Management*, 12 (Supp.), 61–70.
- Richards, Lyn (1999), *Using NVivo in qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Sinkovics, Noemi (2013), 'Adopting neural net methodology for literature mapping and the generation of research ideas: An example at the interface of entrepreneurship, ICT, and economic development', in *International marketing in rapidly changing environments*, Ruey-Jer Jean, Jyh-Shen Chiou and Shaoming Zou (Eds.). Advances in international marketing, Vol. 24. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 103–23.
- Sinkovics, Noemi (2016), 'Enhancing the foundations for theorising through bibliometric mapping', *International Marketing Review*, 33(3), 327–50.
- Sinkovics, Noemi, Rudolf R. Sinkovics and Mo Yamin (2014), 'The role of social value creation in business model formulation at the bottom of the pyramid – implications for mnes?' *International Business Review*, 23(4), 692–707.
- Sinkovics, Rudolf R. and Eva A. Alföldi (2012), 'Progressive focusing and trustworthiness in qualitative research', *Management International Review*, 52(6), 817–45.
- Todaro, Michael P. and Stephen C. Smith (2011), *Economic development* (11th ed.). Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited.
- Tolman, Edward C. (1966), 'Eulogy', in *The psychology of Egon Brunswik*, Kenneth R. Hammond (Ed.). Austin, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1–14.
- Trochim, William M. K. (1985), 'Pattern-matching, validity, and conceptualization in program-evaluation', *Evaluation Review*, 9(5), 575–604.
- Trochim, William M. K. (1989), 'Outcome pattern-matching and program theory', *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 12(4), 355–66.
- Trochim, William M. K. and James P. Donnelly (2008), *Research methods knowledge base*. Mason, OH: Atomic Dog/Cengage Learning.

- Trochim, William M. K. and Rhoda Linton (1986), 'Conceptualization for planning and evaluation', *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 9(4), 289–308.
- van Eck, Nees Jan and Ludo Waltman (2010), 'Software survey: VOSviewer, a computer program for bibliometric mapping', *Scientometrics*, 84(2), 523–538.
- van Eck, Nees Jan and Ludo Waltman (2014), 'Visualizing bibliometric networks', in *Measuring scholarly impact: Methods and practice*, Ying Ding, Ronald Rousseau, and Dietmar Wolfram (Eds.), Bern, Switzerland: Springer, 285–320.
- Waters, Andrew J., Geoffrey Underwood and John M. Findlay (1997), 'Studying expertise in music reading: Use of a pattern-matching paradigm', *Perception & Psychophysics*, 59(4), 477–488.
- Weick, Karl E. (1989), 'Theory construction as disciplined imagination', *The Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 516–31.
- Wible, James R. and Norman H. Sedgley III (1999), 'The role of econometrics in the neo-classical research program', in *What do economists know?: New economics of knowledge*, Robert F. Garnett (Ed.). London, New York: Routledge, 169–90.
- Wolfe, Dael (1959), 'Preface', in *Psychology: A study of a science, volume 3: Formulations of the person and the social context*, Sigmund Koch (Ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Yin, Robert K. (2009), *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yin, Robert K. and Gwendolyn B. Moore (1988), 'Lessons on the utilization of research from nine case experiences in the natural hazards field', *Knowledge in Society*, 1(3), 25–44.
- Zeiss, Chris and Lianne Lefsrud (1995), 'Analytical framework for waste-facility siting', *Journal of Urban Planning and Development – ASCE*, 121(4), 115–45.

Metaphorizing the Research Process

Mats Alvesson and Jörgen Sandberg

INTRODUCTION

Management and organization studies (hereafter MOS) is a large and lively research field, comprising an enormous variety of perspectives, methodologies and research styles. Or is it? Quite the contrary, despite all the good work being produced, contemporary MOS – like many other fields – is frequently accused of being dull, narrow, incremental and irrelevant.

Scholars have increasingly expressed concerns and frustrations about the lack of more novel, influential and relevant ideas published in organizational journals. Gap-spotting, formulaic, pedantic, parochial and boring are frequent pejorative characterizations of current management research (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013; Gabriel, 2010; Grey, 2010). Many ask for more imaginative and influential work, acknowledging that is not what academics do these days (George, 2014; Starbuck, 2006; Suddaby et al., 2011). Instead, isomorphism and parochialism rule,

which have resulted in highly constricted ways of doing and writing research.

Many suggestions for boosting the development of more interesting and influential research have been made, such as using problematization for generating research questions (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013); applying a metaphoric lens on the object of study (Cornelissen & Durand, 2014); and focusing on problem-oriented rather than theory-driven research (Corley & Gioia, 2011).

In this chapter, we concentrate on a possible way forward, namely *metaphorizing* the entire research process. In contrast to the above attempts, which focus on single elements of the research process (research question, object of study, literature review), metaphorizing the entire research process provides a more comprehensive approach for opening up the prevalent tunnel vision of the research process. Specifically, we aim to make a case for the value of a systematic, self-critical and reflexive metaphorization of a number of key elements of the research

process (hereafter: RP). We contend that such a broad and comprehensive metaphorization of RP has the potential of increasing the chances for researchers to generate more interesting and influential ideas and engaging research texts by (a) stimulating provocations and insights, and (b) encouraging the reader to think differently and more actively about several issues that normally are taken for granted or normalized in research. Hence, our intention is not to conduct research on metaphors per se, but to elaborate a *metaphorical framework* that can function as a heuristic device both for unsettling taken-for-granted ways of conducting research and for finding alternative ways of doing research that can lead to more imaginative and impactful research.

Metaphorical frameworks that stimulate rethinking on broad and profound levels, like those proposed by Burrell and Morgan (1979) and Morgan (1980, 1986), are as valuable as rare. Without placing the chapter in the same class of contributions, our aim is still to encourage a broadening and a rethinking of how we conduct research rather than adding precision and systematization to specific parts or details of the conventional research process. Most knowledge contributions are focused, often motivated but increasingly subspecialized and narrow in scope (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2014). This chapter is wide-angled and aims at enhancing the capacity of researchers on a broad scale through disclosing a wealth of options, only partly indicated so far. In particular, our metaphorization of the research process provides a *kaleidoscopic* view of RP, which offers a heuristic toolbox that can be used both for becoming aware of taken-for-granted ways of conducting research and for creating new opportunities for carrying out more imaginative and interesting research and writing.

The outline of the chapter is as follows. We begin by discussing some key characteristics of ‘metaphors’ followed by a brief note on methods. Against this background we elaborate a spectrum of ten key elements of RP

portrayed as a kaleidoscope of RP metaphors. Thereafter, we formulate a set of guidelines for putting the metaphors to work. We then examine how the framework can be used for generating alternative ways of conducting research by applying it to Barley’s (1986) highly praised article about technology and organizational structure. Finally, we discuss how the metaphorization of the entire RP can contribute to the development of more interesting research and writing.

METAPHOR PARAPHERNALIA

Meaning(s) of Metaphor

Since Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) classic text *Metaphors We Live By*, the use of metaphors has expanded within the social sciences and is now important in almost every discipline within the social sciences, including MOS (Cornelissen et al., 2008; Gibbs, 2008; Putnam & Boys, 2006; Steen et al., 2010).

In a narrow, traditional sense, a metaphor is simply an *illustrative device* stipulating that metaphors are words that make language richer or more felicitous (Brown, 1976). However, a central insight that spans across most disciplines and schools is that metaphors are not only ornamental aspects of language but also frame our thinking and doings in important ways (Brown, 1976; Cornelissen, 2005; Gibbs, 2008; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Morgan, 1980, 1983; Weick, 1992). We never relate to reality ‘as such’, but always do so through forming metaphors or images of the phenomena we address. For example, organizations are seen as if they are ‘machines’, ‘organisms’, ‘political arenas’, ‘theatres’ or ‘psychic prisons’ (Morgan, 1980, 1986). As Morgan (1996, p. 228) writes, the use of metaphors is ‘a primal, generative process that is fundamental to the creation of human understanding and meaning in all aspects of life’. Metaphors – in the sense of root or organizing images, rather than poetic language

use – draw attention to implicit or hidden aspects of different perspectives and vocabularies (Morgan, 1980, 1986) and may function as powerful starting points for new ways of seeing phenomena, such as organizational change (e.g. Illes & Ritchie, 1999).

Hence, in contrast to ‘the metaphor as the illustrative-device view’, it can be argued that all knowledge is basically metaphorical in that it emerges or is ‘constructed’ from some point of view. So, too, are our experiences, for ‘our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature’ (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 3). Metaphorizing can thus be seen as *a crucial element in how people relate to reality*.

Metaphor Work

A metaphor is created when a term (sometimes referred to as ‘modifier’) is transferred from one system or level of meaning to another (the principal subject), thereby illuminating central aspects of the latter and shadowing others, like seeing ‘organization’ (principal subject) *as a* ‘pyramid’ (modifier). A metaphor thus allows an object (‘organization’) to be perceived and understood from the viewpoint of another object (‘pyramid’). Using words as metaphors therefore means a departure from their literal meaning: ‘A word receives a metaphorical meaning in specific contexts within which they are opposed to other words taken literally; this shift in meaning results mainly from a clash between literal meanings, which excludes literal use of the word in question’ (Ricoeur, 1978, p. 138, see also Steen et al., 2010).

Brown (1976, p. 173) points to the following characteristics as central to metaphors. Metaphors involve what Aristotle called ‘giving the thing a name that belongs to something else’. If a metaphor is taken literally, it usually appears absurd. The necessary ingredient of difference has a specific cognitive function: ‘it makes us stop in our tracks

and examine it. It offers us a new awareness’. Metaphors are intended to be understood: ‘they are category errors with a purpose, linguistic madness with a method’ (ibid., p. 173). Metaphors must be approached and understood as if they were true at the same time that we are aware that they are fictitious – created and artificial.

A good metaphor, therefore, depends on an appropriate mix of similarity and difference between the transferred word and the focal one. Where there is too much or too little similarity or difference, the point may not be understood. As a result, metaphor generation is a precarious enterprise. However, according to Cornelissen and Kafouros (2008, p. 365), impactful metaphors in MOS are those that are: ‘(1) seen to capture multiple salient features of organizations and (2) the ease with which the metaphor is understood’.

Advantages and Problems in Using Metaphors

The most frequently expressed advantage of using metaphors is their ability to encourage creativity, generate new ideas and guide analysis in novel ways, as well as their capacity to communicate (Cornelissen & Durand, 2014; Grant & Oswick, 1996; Morgan, 1980; Schön, 1979). Metaphors can also enable critical scrutiny of organizational research and practice. For example, a focus on (root) metaphors may facilitate examination of our basic assumptions of organizational phenomena.

There are of course also problems using metaphors. One is that metaphors may have a strong rhetorical and even seductive appeal, but score lower on precision and rigour (Pinder & Bourgeois, 1982). Another risk is the supermarket orientation to metaphors (Reed, 1990) leading to shallowness; metaphorical expressions are (seemingly) easy to use, but may be followed by low ability to master and use them productively in research. An additional problem is that sometimes a

specific image or idea is difficult to capture through a distinct metaphorical formulation.

Metaphors can thus be seen as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, they have the potential to help us to transcend and see our daily practices in a new and novel light. On the other, dominant (but also novel alternative) metaphors can easily become a prison, locking us into unquestioned forms of understanding and doing research. A good dosage of reflexivity appears therefore central in metaphor work (Alvesson et al., 2008). In this study, reflexivity involves a preparedness to employ various ‘seeing as’ tactics in addressing various elements of RP.

AWAKENING THE DEAD

By metaphorizing RP we want to loosen up and challenge the current *rigidity* and standardization of carrying out research within MOS. A key reason for this rigidity is that the current tunnel vision of RP is underpinned by a huge set of ‘dead’ or ‘frozen’ metaphors, i.e. metaphors that are no longer understood as metaphors but have been taken for granted and have assumed a self-evident, literal meaning. RP elements and expressions like ‘theory building’, ‘data collection’, ‘design’ and ‘codification’ are often treated not as metaphors but as precise representations of specific research activities. By reminding ourselves of taken-for-granted metaphors, we can become more (self-)critical and receptive to alternatives and, thus, new ways of doing research. The point here is of course not that dead or taken-for-granted metaphors indicate ‘bad’ ways of doing research. Instead, the problem is that they have lost their metaphorical quality and, therefore, tend to freeze our understanding rather than stimulate imagination and reflexivity.

In order to wake up and become aware of such ‘dead’ metaphors and loosen up their grip on the way we do research, generating counter-metaphors is key; meaning that our

task is not a conservative one of mapping and reproducing what is out there (in contemporary texts), but – in line with Morgan’s (1980, 1986) project – to stimulate imagination, creativity and rethinking. In order to accomplish this, we generate a range of metaphorical tensions between common and alternative metaphors. Such a reflexive metaphorical approach can be formulated in dialectical terms: starting point, negation and transcendence. The starting point is the common (and often taken-for-granted) metaphorical views on elements of RP and/or the specific (perhaps non-common) view held by the researcher and her field. Thereafter, radically different metaphors (to the one celebrated by the researcher and/or her community) are invoked, followed by confronting different metaphorical views of the targeted RP elements against each other with the aim of generating new and imaginative ideas about the elements and how to carry them out.

METAPHORIZING THE RESEARCH PROCESS: A KALEIDOSCOPE OF RP METAPHORS

We focus on the following key elements usually seen as central characteristics of RP: overall point of research, researcher’s role, literature review, theoretical framework, method, design, data, analysis, writing and contributions. Using these elements as a basis, we point at dominant or at least common metaphors and less common ones, generating a spectrum of imaginative options of what RP is basically about. We begin metaphorizing more conventional understandings and then add alternatives. The key point is not that the latter is ‘better’ than the former, as all kinds of metaphors are potentially useful (and problematic). More specifically, our aim is not to provide an alternative way of conducting research but rather a *kaleidoscopic* view of RP, which has the capacity to generate a huge variety of novel

patterns and angles for carrying out more imaginative research and writing more stimulating research texts.

A kaleidoscope is a cylinder consisting of one section of mirrors attached together in specific angles, and then another section of objects such as coloured pieces of glass. When looking into it and rotating it, the kaleidoscope generates a large variety of new and shifting patterns and images due to the reflections off the mirrors. In a similar way as the 'real' kaleidoscope, our RP kaleidoscope consists of two interrelated sections: one section of interrelated metaphors and another section of elements of the research processes. When looking into it, the RP kaleidoscope has the potential to generate several new and novel patterns and images of RP, due to the interactions between the RP metaphors. As Gunning (1997, p. 32) noted, 'Brewster [the inventor of the kaleidoscope] praised his invention as a labor saving art-making machine which would: "create in an hour, what a thousand artists could not invent in the course of a year"'. Of course, in research we do not accomplish much in an hour but rethinking our projects in a distinct way may save some time and effort.

We structure the metaphorization of RP in three large interrelated groupings: inputs, process and outcome elements. These categories should not be over-emphasized: the production/factory metaphor we implicitly use here should be read ironically. Inputs are often best seen in process, and the latter is often more or less given by the assumptions and commitments through which the researcher enters a project. Nevertheless, the categories offer some help in sorting the elements making up RP. The kaleidoscope of RP metaphors is summarized in Figure 29.1, and further developed below.

Input Elements

The input elements include the overall point of research and researcher's role, and refer to

how RP is framed through the researcher's socialization into a specific social identity/collective affiliation and its view of what research is about. These elements point largely at what Kuhn (1970) referred to as the paradigmatic underpinnings of research. Here, encouraging frame-breaking and non-conformity are vital for increased imagination.

The overall point of research

The idea here is not what a particular study is about or how to conceptualize the target of study, but what research as such is about, i.e. why do we do research at all? Normally, the point of research is seen as *building knowledge* in the sense of piecing together an enormous 'theoretical jigsaw puzzle' that is assumed to gradually lead us to the true picture of reality. Another way of putting it is that research is about *mapmaking*. Sometimes there are white spots on the map that need to be filled, sometimes more details are required to make the map more reliable, and on other occasions an aspect of the existing map provides an inaccurate picture of reality. References to 'gaps' in knowledge are common, perhaps too common.

A counter-metaphor to knowledge building can be that research is about *knowledge demolition* in the sense of challenging received wisdom (Davis, 1971). Such research introduces frictions, preventing the smooth following of a particular route on the map, or, alternatively, challenges the idea of map-(re-)making more generally. Another alternative metaphor could be to regard research as *point-making*. Delivering a knowledge product versus making a point evokes rather different overall conceptions of what research as such is about. Perhaps even more radical would be to see the point of research as *reality creation*. Regarding research as reality creation challenges the assumption that we, through scientific research, can map reality as it is in itself. Instead, the reality creation metaphor suggests that we create realities through our research texts, possibly

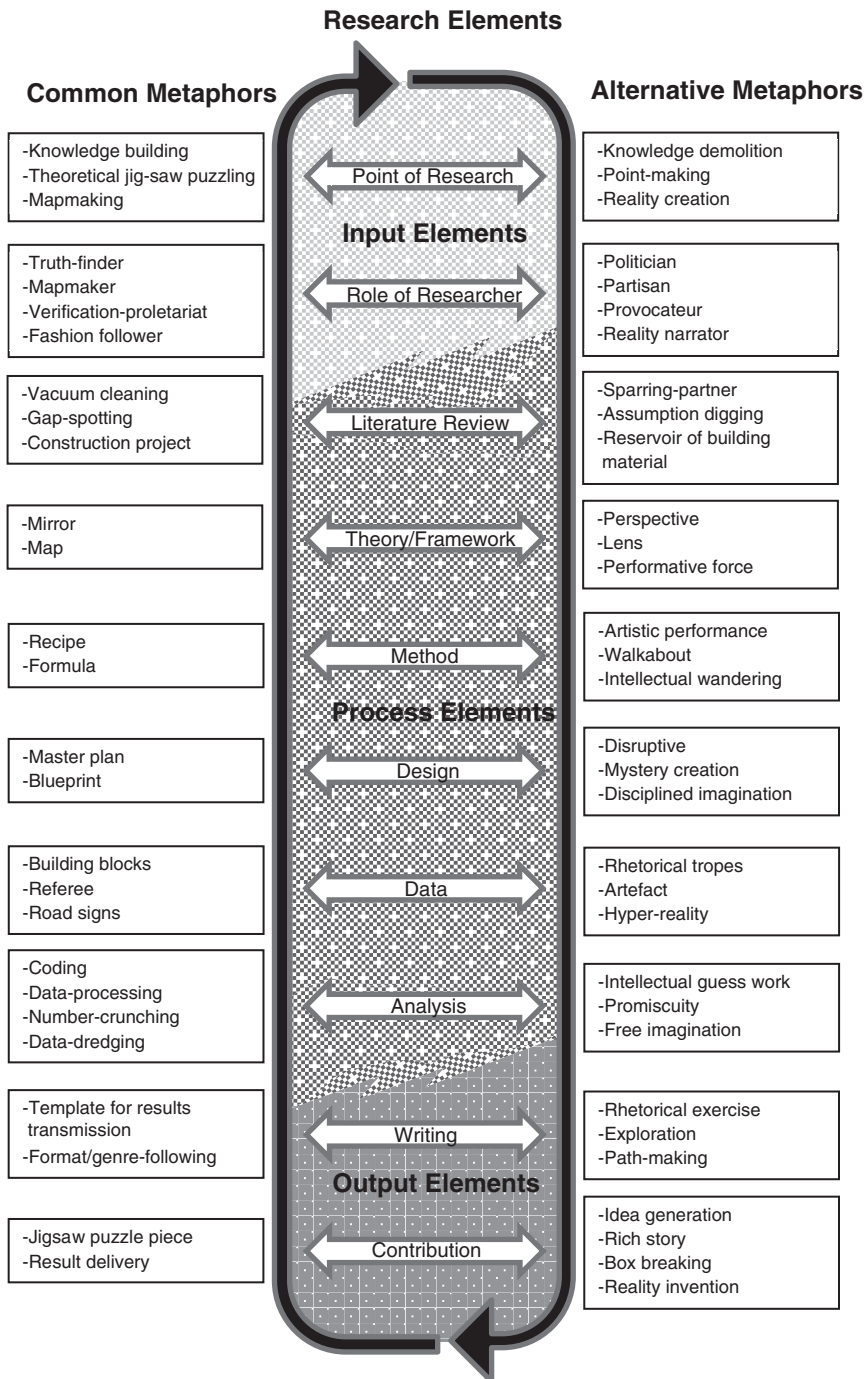


Figure 29.1 A Kaleidoscope of RP metaphors

in harmful ways (Foucault, 1980; Ghoshal, 2005). For example, the creation of a social world where leadership and strategy dominate is at least partly driven by discourses (cf. Knights & Morgan, 1991), and economic theories work as self-fulfilling prophecies (Ferraro et al., 1993). This can be seen as quite grandiose, the researcher-king/queen rules the world, but more modest understandings are of course possible.

The researcher's role

The researcher is still very much seen as a *truth-finder* in most research, although the exact meaning of this varies with different notions of truth (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009). Even in some qualitative work with a poststructuralist inclination, the empirical study is somehow often portrayed as delivering some form of truth (Wray-Bliss, 2002). Following from the metaphors used to describe the point of research one could see the researcher's role as a *mapmaker* making 'true pictures' of reality.

But if research is seen as point-making it is likely that the researcher's role would be more like an *insight generator*, and in research as knowledge demolition, the researcher may take on the role as a *provocateur* or even 'partisan' (Silverman, 2006). However, when regarding research as reality creation, it may be more suitable to see the researcher as a *reality narrator*. Of course, everything can be seen as narrating, but a typical academic text, written in a formulaic manner, scores rather badly as a narrative.

Process Elements

Although every aspect of RP is process(ed), we here address the more active elements involved in carrying out a specific empirical study, namely: literature review, theoretical framework, method, design, data and analysis. These major process elements can be thought of in terms of various images problematizing the ways we think about and

carry out empirical work and how we relate to empirical material.

Literature review

In the prevalent view of research as knowledge building or mapmaking, the literature review may be portrayed as 'vacuum cleaning' or *gap-spotting* (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013). Those metaphors regard the literature review as thoroughly and methodically reviewing existing literature in order to identify missing pieces in the communal jigsaw puzzle or white spots in the knowledge map that need to be filled and, based on that, pointing to how one's study will contribute to existing literature by adding yet another piece to the theoretical jigsaw puzzle. However, how literature is connected and packed in reviews is often arbitrary (Locke & Golden-Biddle, 1997). For example, sometimes the literature review may be seen as a *construction project* rather than as a vacuum cleaning job in the sense that the researcher selectively brings together different bodies of literature in order to legitimize a specific research study.

As an alternative to vacuum cleaning and gap-spotting, the literature review can be seen as a *sparring partnership* for creating counter-thinking in a field. But if the point of research is seen as knowledge demolition, the literature review may be regarded as *assumption digging* – an exercise in identifying and challenging assumptions (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013; Davis, 1971). Here, the researcher does not look for gaps but digs down under the theory to lay bare its footing and, based on that, generate a new set of assumptions that form the foundation of an alternative theory. But in cases when research is seen as reality creation, the literature review may be viewed as a *reservoir of narrative material* for producing new and powerful stories that help us see our world and ourselves in a new light. Another metaphor for connecting to existing literature could be *idea-picking*. Rather than an authoritative, well-packaged summary of the state of the

art in a subfield, the literature is reviewed broadly and unsystematically with the aim of getting some unexpected inputs to a study.¹

Theoretical framework

Another common element of RP is the particular theory or theoretical framework that is used to inform a specific study in various ways. When research is seen as knowledge building, theory is often seen as a specific *mirror* or *map* of reality. For example, in much deductive research, the idea is to test to what extent a specific theory mirrors reality. The same holds true for more traditional inductive research, where the theory generated from data should represent that data as exactly as possible (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). However, when research is seen as *point-making*, theory may be seen more as a specific ‘perspective’ or *lens*, indicating that theory is perspectival rather than an objective picture of reality. In cases where research is seen as reality construction, theory may be seen as a ‘performative force’ shaping social reality. In critical studies, theory is more a matter of provocation and triggering emancipatory thinking. Theory is then understood as an *eye opener* rather than as a mirror or a device for sorting impressions of the phenomenon studied (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000).

Methods

Research methods are often seen as a ‘recipe’ or *formula*, consisting of specific steps and procedures for the researcher to follow and obey, in order to generate an accurate representation of reality. For example, in standard method books (e.g. Flick, 2006; Sekaran, 2000) deductive research methods stipulate that the researcher needs to adhere to the following sequential steps: theory formulation, hypothesizing, operationalization, sampling, data collection, analysis and validation. Inductive research methods are often depicted as more *pattern-detecting* than linear consisting of collecting and analysing data, and strictly comparing cases. It moves back and forth between data collection, analysis

and case comparison over and over until the theory is ‘fully’ developed. However, if the point of research is seen as point-making, knowledge demolition or reality creation, method may be seen of as *searching for negations*, *de-familiarization* (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000) or *intellectual wandering*. Considering such a spectrum of metaphors provides considerably more room for creativity, imagination and responsiveness regarding how to carry out research. However, it may also encourage wild ideas and lack of discipline and rigour, and may need therefore to be balanced with considerations of coherence and careful reasoning.

Design

The metaphorical meaning of design is often taken for granted. As the editors of *Academy of Management Journal* point out to its readers, ‘choosing the appropriate design is critical to the success of a manuscript at *AMJ*, in part because the fundamental design of a study cannot be altered during the revision process’ (Bono & McNamara, 2011, p. 657). Referring to parts of the research process as design is of course in itself quite heavily metaphorical, although typically not recognized as such. The design can be conceptualized as a *master plan* or a ‘blueprint’ for how to conduct research. In cases where research is seen as more open-minded, design seems to become a misleading term – indicating something fixed and solid to be executed. Possible alternative metaphors could be *journey*, ‘exploration’ or even ‘intellectual adventure’. Yet another alternative is *mystery creation* – the researcher encounters or aims for an unexpected empirical observation challenging dominant understandings (such as in the Hawthorne studies) – which calls for a more flexible and open study than one informed by a strict design (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011). These metaphors highlight that research can be about confronting or preventing a particular logic or mode of thought from being outlined and thus creating a breakdown in existing assumptions and

beliefs. In research as reality construction, 'design' becomes even more of an oxymoron. A more suitable metaphor may be *disciplined imagination* (Weick, 1989).

Data

The term 'data' is perhaps one of the most commonly used terms in research texts. It is typically joined with other words such as 'data collection' or 'data analysis'. When the point of research is building theory or testing hypotheses, data are often seen as the basic *building blocks* of reality mirroring. Here data are also often regarded as a *referee*, who decides whether a knowledge map is true or false. Similarly, data can be seen as *road-signs*, showing the way to knowledge/theory in line with grounded theory and other dataistic inductivists (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011).

If research is about point-making, data may be seen more as *rhetorical tropes* that can be lined up to make the point forcefully. When research is regarded as knowledge demolition and reality creation, the idea of data as basic building blocks of reality becomes problematic and even misleading. Instead, data are seen as 'artefacts' or 'representations'. That is, as something constructed and produced through human activities, giving rise to what Baudrillard (1994) called 'hyper-reality'; a situation in which what is 'real' and what is 'map' are an entangled whole impossible to distinguish from one another.

Researchers often talk about *collecting* data, as if data are something that can be picked from the ground, like mushrooms, i.e. data collection as *mushroom picking*. Regarding data as something to be collected easily leads to a view of the researchers as data gatherers busy trying to tap the informants-workers on the raw material to be used in the process of building knowledge. For example, the interview is seen as a *tapping device* used to tap the interviewees on important data, and observation can be seen as a *camera* for capturing the actual reality.

When the point of research is seen as reality creation, where reality and map are seen

as seamlessly blended together into a hyper-reality, it may be more suitable to talk about 'generation' or 'construction' of data than collection (i.e. mushroom picking). Interviews may be seen as specific sites for data construction in a complex interaction between interviewer and interviewee involved in impression management, political action or identity work (Alvesson, 2011). Observation may be seen more as an *artistic portrait*, perhaps of an impressionist or confessional nature (van Maanen, 1988). Artistically portraying data does not of course mean that the researcher is free to invent or make up any kind of knowledge claim or 'story'. The use of artistic qualities in observations may simply mean less 'square', superficial and conventional and more imaginative, lively, insightful and 'deeper' ways of portraying something (e.g. Geertz, 1973).

Analysis

When data are seen as building blocks of reality, the analysis is typically seen as *coding* of data. It involves classifying and sorting the collected data into distinct categories and gradually abstracting those categories into a new piece that will add to the never-ending theoretical jigsaw puzzle. Here one may somewhat ironically see the code as a way of turning the well-known into something cryptic and secretive, as it tends to transform something that may appear to be 'natural' into something de-contextualized, abstract and standardized – often with the loss of sensitivity for social context and meaning (Brinkmann, 2014; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Other aspects of the data analysis could be indicated by the metaphor 'data-processing', indicating a factory-like treatment of empirical material.

Researchers who interpret rather than analyse data often take the standpoint that although data are 'out there' (to be 'collected'), they do not speak for themselves but must be interpreted. This is because data are always experienced or understood from a subject's point of view. This kind of

interpretive work can be seen as *intelligent guess-work* (Geertz, 1973). However, in cases where the point of research is seen as reality creation where ‘data’ and ‘map’ have dissolved into each other, more suitable metaphors may be *free imagination* (to borrow an expression from phenomenology) or ‘promiscuous analysis’ (Childers, 2014). These metaphors/images encourage researchers to release themselves from strictly following a specific recipe and instead be more responsive and sensitive to the complexity of reality.

Outcome Elements

The outcome elements entail writing and contribution, which are mainly involved in expressing and communicating the finished research and its contribution. Even though these elements are key issues a long time before the researcher starts to craft the contribution, they become more salient and significant when the more intensive empirical stages have been carried out.

Writing

Language is commonly seen as a *representation tool* or as a ‘mirror of reality’ and as a ‘transparent medium’ for the objective transport of information about reality. These metaphors often guide ideas on data collection, such as the assumption that questionnaires or interviews are transmission vehicles for writing up the results (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Writing is often viewed as a ‘template driven exercise’ for the effective communication and transmission of results. The established format stands for superior rationality, viewed as a recipe for effective and rigorous reporting. Often, no subject seems to be writing the text. Instead, scientific rationality, manifested in ‘the study’ or ‘the article’ seems to write the text.

But when research is seen as point-making, writing can be portrayed as a *rhetorical exercise* – the text as a piece of rhetoric (Richardson, 2000) – rather than as a correct

representation of reality. Beauty is here emphasized. (Of course, issues around ‘correctness’ and rhetoric can never be fully disregarded. Both data reflecting reality and/or persuasive writing can be emphasized as key elements in thinking about research texts.) Alternatively, writing can be seen as *exploration* – you think when you write. Van Maanen (1988) uses the notion of ‘tales of the field’ to point at variations of ethnographic writing. In cases when research is seen as reality creation, writing may be seen as *path-making* in the sense that ‘to write ... is to carve out a new path through the terrain of the imagination’ (Solnit, 2001, p. 72). Although non-conventional writing does not mean ‘anything goes’, such as neglecting empirical grounding, it may lead to richer and more vivid representations of empirical contexts (e.g. Grey & Sinclair, 2006; Kunda, 1992; Rosen, 1985).

Contribution

In many versions of research, contributions are often seen as delivery of ‘jigsaw puzzle pieces’. The conducted study has identified and developed a new piece to be added to the ongoing theoretical jigsaw puzzle of organization studies. An alternative set of metaphors may be to see contributions as *result delivery*, *idea generation* or *rich story*. When seen as result delivery, the contribution may be regarded as end-heavy – the empirical finding, the synthesis of findings, extension of theory, etc. When contributions are seen as idea generation they may be beginning-heavy; the author has a point or theoretical idea that drives the text. Here the thesis, the new framework or idea is offered. In cases when contribution is seen as rich story, the contribution may be seen as mid-heavy, focused on following the account where the author presents empirical material or reason so that the reader is stimulated to get a rich understanding or follow (be inspired or upset by) the text’s reasoning, e.g. in thick description (Geertz, 1973). Yet, when the point of research, as within strongly ‘constructionist’ (discursive) understandings, is seen as reality

creation, contributions may be seen more as ‘reality invention’. As Foucault (1980) emphasized, a problem with knowledge is that it creates reality. Taken together, the metaphorization of the above key RP elements generates a whole range of new ways of understanding and conducting research and, thus, has the potential to lead to more imaginative and engaging research. How, we further discuss below.

FROM A LINEAR TO A KALEIDOSCOPIC VIEW OF RP

In most conventional understandings RP follows a linear path. Interest and literature review leads to a research question, the elaboration of a firm theoretical position informs the latter, the specification of the research question points to a specific design, followed by data collection, thereafter data analysis that produces findings, which subsequently informs writing and research contributions. Linearity and adherence to conventions may appear convincing on paper, but is often largely a fabrication, aiming to portray the researcher as rational, rigorous and truthful. It also tends to reduce recognition and amplification of creative elements in research. Linearity is seldom the route to good ideas and stimulating research texts. As a way to counteract this linear tunnel vision of RP, we propose a kaleidoscopic view, in which all the elements outlined above (and summarized above in Figure 29.1), can be re-imagined more or less constantly – or at least in various stages of RP.

A kaleidoscopic view of RP does not of course mean that everything goes. Instead, it offers an ability of increased *disciplined imagination* (Weick, 1989) in the sense that it allows researchers to generate greater heterogeneity in research. As Weick (1989, p. 522) notes ‘a greater number of diverse conjectures produce better theory than a [theorizing] process characterized by a smaller number of homogenous conjectures’.

The metaphorized *input* RP elements provide resources for creating a space for doing research differently and potentially more creatively than through following received wisdom in the starting phase. Energy is used to imagine the range of options for the overall point of research (gap-filling, knowledge demolition) and researcher identity (footnote-adder to theory, trouble-maker), etc. This may then lead to either a revision (or reinforcement) of an input position or the clarification of some possibilities being accessible (and creatively exploited) in interacting with emergent ideas and choices enfolding during RP. This could encourage researchers to seriously think through the overall purpose of their research and, relatedly, their research identity. Against an institutionalized logic that drives researchers into strong conformism in terms of basic orientations, it is possible to re-imagine one’s work and re-position it into something more novel and unpredictable for one’s sub-tribe. The poststructuralist provocateur could try to take seriously the possibility of mapping the world or the gap-spotting knowledge builder could take a devil’s advocate position and aim for knowledge demolition. Something creative and unexpected may arise when one is trying to think in ‘alien’ or counter-mainstream ways, and to do work inspired by (temporary) different subject positions of doing research.

Using (one or several of) the metaphorized *process* elements as resources means starting RP more or less as usual but then during the inquiry engaging in more ambitious process reflexivity than what is common. Is the literature review an effective compass for leading my study straight away, or an occasion for critical questioning and problematization? What are the best ways of imagining the nature of the data/empirical material? Building blocks for authoritative knowing (mirror reality) or uncertain hints for informed guesses (creative portrayals)? Is the empirical material suitable for rigorous codification work? Or does it consist of a mix of informants that have given more or less well-informed/questionable

empirical accounts of the research object, calling for intensive detective work and source-critique to sort out who and what is worth one's attention?

Process elements offer a range of options for breaking away from habitual modes of thinking and doing research. For example, through planning the research and/or when working with data, one could seriously consider alternative approaches based on a spectrum of metaphors. Am I controlling data to make a rigorous knowledge building case? Can data be mobilized as elements in a story, where the accuracy of details matter less than the credibility and insightfulness of the narrative, or are data of potentially most interest and value through kicking back at established frameworks and discourses, being a vehicle for knowledge demolition and the inspiration of rethinking? In a similar way, other process themes can be compared and confronted and the researcher may consider if an alternative to the conventional one would lead to new ideas, descriptions and results.

Using the metaphorized *output* RP elements means that the ambitious work is done mainly during the later stages of research in real time, although the researcher can for example actively think about options of the text production already before starting the actual research. Writing and contribution issues are then upgraded as perhaps the key elements in RP and are re-thought through imagining a variety of options. For example, language can be re-metaphorized as a creative device or a mirror of reality, writing as performative enterprise or as a medium for delivery of results, and contribution as adding to the knowledge map or as story-telling, as ongoing conversation or as a box-breaking conversation-stopper (calling for radical rethinking and dropping certain topics).

Outcome-themes are of course related to other elements in the RP, but the researcher can also work backwards. Fairly late in the process there are choices of how to write. Perhaps choosing publication outlets such as a book, an essay, a chapter or a journal article

are less significant than the type of writing aimed for. Again, being careful and reflexive about the type of writing style is central for interesting studies. Rather than imitating others and following the formula, researchers can seriously consider alternative writing styles, select and embrace a chosen style or a combination thereof (e.g. through reading inspiring texts and practising, getting feedback and support etc.) and then try to accomplish a good text. Hopefully, our chapter can help in providing some legitimization through lining up alternatives and pointing out the non-given nature of the writing project. Similar ideas are relevant for views of contributions – as well as all the other elements in the RP.

Taken together, the value of using a kaleidoscopic view of RP is to provide ideas and support for rethinking, picking and/or developing metaphors that can generate some new insights or increased (or more disciplined/self-critical) playfulness, creativity and opportunity spotting when doing research and writing research texts and, thus, generate greater disciplined imagination in the research process. Such metaphor mobilization enables researchers to both become aware of and distance themselves from conventional and 'dead' metaphors (or one's own habitual thinking) and to discover new ways of generating ideas and communicating their research. Perhaps the researcher thinks, 'Aha, I can approach the research task, my self-understanding, the literature I am struggling with, design issues, view on the nature of data or writing quite differently than I thought earlier and/or what the "mainstream" prescribes and, thereby, produce less predictable and dull ideas and texts than are common'.

SOME GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PUTTING THE KALEIDOSCOPE OF RP METAPHORS TO WORK

Below we outline some general guidelines for how the proposed spectrum of RP metaphors

can be used for generating ideas, empirical material and texts that are seen as novel, interesting and less predictable and formulaic than is common. The guidelines are not to be read as a set of formulas or recipes but as potentially helpful resources to generate more varied and imaginative studies and engaging texts.

- 1 *Identify* the current, taken-for-granted metaphors in use. This means stepping back and thinking through the varieties of meanings of what the researcher and his/her research tribe are doing in terms of basic meanings of the RP. Researchers approach their research project/subfield with some critical distance, making an effort in de-familiarization. The key question then becomes 'what is really going on here that is not self-evidently sensible?' What appears self-evident may not be the case. This identification work can be done during or in between projects. One looks at a previous project and re-reads one's text or scrutinizes the work of those of similar inclinations in the subfield with the aim of uncovering some peculiarities and oddities of the ways one does (or is claiming to do) research. The metaphors in use are thus clarified.
- 2 Awakening the *dead* metaphors. Part of the identification exercise is to make what is not directly acknowledged as underlying images or ideas more accessible for reflection. Apart from bringing these out, it is especially important to identify some metaphors that are *dead* – not in any absolute sense but for the researcher and her community – and awaken them, for him-/herself and others. In other words, the researcher should try to get some intellectual control over what normally is controlling him or her in the research process. This is not only about targeting the usual suspects like 'design', 'data' or 'theory building'. It is also about pursuing seemingly progressive and live metaphors, which are so much taken for granted that they have received a zombie-like status, e.g. 'narrative', 'resistance' or 'discourse as a reality constructor'. Identifying half-dead metaphors is often as productive as identifying stone dead metaphors as objects for life-saving enterprises. This is not entirely easy, but the framework and examples in this chapter may be helpful. In particular, based on an awareness of what is used or taken for granted, it is possible to

mobilize a number of *alternative metaphors* that are not typically used in the researcher's work or in the subfield, but are possibly relevant. Here, a spectrum of options can be put forward, some of which encourage a break with the researcher's routinized way of being and doing. Such alternatives can stretch thinking and challenge the researcher and clearly add something in the sense of perspectivating research in a novel way.

- 3 Through these moves the researcher hopefully has *access to a set of metaphors* for various parts of RP. Here choices can be made. This is of course not like a supermarket situation, where it is possible to freely select anchoring points for studies. Constraints are strong. They include the researcher's background, preferences, competence, identity, affiliations and other sources of constrained or fixed subjectivity, as well as external restrictions such as norms and pressures in the professional environment. But there is always space for some discretion – and this can be expanded. Facilitating such an expansion of options is the very purpose of this chapter. The metaphorical framework provides the researcher with a repertoire of choices – something in between conformist reproduction of mainstream formulas and free choices between paradigms. The spectrum of metaphors could work as a resource base for the selection of one or several *anchoring points* in the research process, as well as offering resources for confrontation and mind-stretching. When used as anchoring points, these metaphors ensure there are at least some key issues in RP where alternative metaphors (to the ones conventionally used by the research field/researcher in question) are available for reflection. Pursuing alternative metaphors means that the researcher is challenging his/her comfort zone as well as his/her research habits in some respects. Guiding criteria here are a mix of familiarity with unfamiliarity and a good initial grasp of a new metaphor, or seeing a well-used metaphor as strange and problematic.
- 4 Develop an *operative strategy* for metaphorizing RP in a specific project based on privileging a certain set of key elements. Somewhat ironically, we can talk about a metaphorizing 'design'. (This is different from point 1 above, where one uses distributed anchoring points.) This 'strategy' (another metaphor, of course) may focus on input, process or output. Specifically, this strategy enables the researcher to combine the opening

up associated with new metaphors with a tactic for reducing variation and attaining some closure in order to provide direction and produce some discipline in order to create a convincing study.

AN APPLICATION OF THE KALEIDOSCOPE OF RP METAPHORS

In order to illustrate how the kaleidoscope of RP metaphors and its principles can be used to generate new and more imaginative ways of doing research, we have chosen to apply it to Barley's (1986) highly influential and praised paper 'Technology as an occasion for structuring: Evidence from observations of CT scanners and the social order of radiology departments' – voted by a number of prominent academics (the editorial board of *AMJ*) as the most interesting paper in the entire MOS field (Bartunek et al., 2006).

It is not entirely easy to demonstrate how to use the kaleidoscope of RP metaphors more concretely based on one published text, and we cannot fully use all the ideas or steps suggested above, as we are not familiar with the researcher's specific situation or the sub-field at the time of the study. We do think, however, that taking a renewed look at a well-known and celebrated study may be instructive and perhaps inspirational. Would it be possible to turn Barley's study into something even more 'interesting' (the concern of our chapter), that is, could further research learn not only from Barley's existing study but also of alternative ways of approaching the topic in Barley's study? Our metaphorization of Barley's study is not meant to suggest an entirely new 'design' of his study, but rather to show how alternative metaphors at selected areas of the research process could lead to other (perhaps more) interesting ways of conducting such a study.

Barley (1986) notes that evidence for technology's influence on organizational structure is confusing and contradictory. As a way of overcoming and making sense of the

contradictory evidence, he proposes structuration and negotiated order theories. From a combination of these perspectives, 'technologies are better viewed as occasions that trigger social dynamics which, in turn, modify or maintain an organization's contours' (p. 81). Using the framework of structuring theory as a basis, Barley then conducted a study of two radiology departments in hospitals and observed how new technology affected the interaction patterns between radiologists and technicians. Exactly what ideas/metaphors that informed the various parts of the study is hard to tell. The text is also 'tight', leaving few openings for the reader to think differently about the research enacted by Barley. Neither does the study contain any signs of doubt, reflexivity or self-critique as, for example, suggested by advocates of reflexivity (e.g. Alvesson & Sköldborg 2009; Hardy & Clegg, 1997).

When it comes to *the metaphors in use*, Barley presents the study as rationally carried out according to the plan where all ingredients fall neatly into place. It appears almost to be a transport along a fixed route, where all stations (literature review indicating unexplained phenomena, theoretical framework, data collection, analysis) are passed without frictions or surprises. All data have a uniform, clear-cut meaning that can be reduced to standardized categories for interaction (e.g. role reversal, direction giving). The research is presented as a labour process, largely following the logic of a factory. An efficient research machine is in operation: well thought through, processed and with a high-quality, predictable delivery of results to the general MOS audience. The researcher comes out as a very clever operator of the scientific machinery, contributing to knowledge building.

In fact, the research reported appears almost to have been conducted without a researcher (facing dilemmas or ambiguity, using judgement, having to deal with complexities of accessing reality). It is mentioned that 'I began observation' (p. 84) and there

is a reference to 'my field notes', but otherwise, and in all-important respects, it is the research (Science) that is the subject. The text is full of formulations like 'were observed', 'field notes revealed' and 'scripts traced'. Furthermore, claims like 'authority was centralized' are made without any hint that this may be an interpretation, or that the construction of something as 'centralized' may not only be an outcome of objective reality, but rather an effect of the researcher being more than a skilled operator of the Science Machine.

Dead Metaphors

The question of 'dead' is difficult, as it is always a matter of dead for whom. It is hard to know if a person is using an expression in a conscious metaphorical ('live') way or not. However, certain expressions indicate some underlying understandings in the text where the metaphors may have been taken for granted – or perhaps encourage the reader to confuse the metaphor for the literal and precise meaning. Barley has for example a section named 'Mapping the evolution of structure' (p. 81). Here 'evolution' of 'structure' is simply there to be 'mapped' like the flow of the Nile. All data are addressed as robust building blocks for the study. Data were 'gathered'. They were easily turned into something standardized. 'Each episode was then reduced to an initial plot' (p. 85). Expressions like distribution, centralization and roles are used in the paper as if these were unproblematic representations of underlying phenomena, lacking any metaphorical quality. They seem to be employed in order to make the link between the interactions between people from two occupations into a credible case for organizational structure. Another possible dead metaphor enacted by Barley is 'coding', like 'measures of centralization were constructed by coding instances of routine decision making' (p. 86) and 'dummy variable that coded each scan's

date' (p. 105) further emphasizing research as mapmaking.

An *alternative* metaphor to Barley's 'knowledge building enterprise' could be to emphasize 'point-making' more strongly as the key element of the study. This could be done through the idea of 'knowledge demolition', where the researcher challenges and provokes the mainstream views of technology and structure in favour of a structuring perspective. A more radical view of the methodology needed for understanding technology in relationship to organizational structure could then be put forward. Writing as following 'templates for result transmission' could be confronted with a more radical, challenging and upsetting 'path-making' understanding. Here established literature in the field could be addressed as a failure and a superior alternative put forward and advocated as part of a paradigm war or confrontation. Such confrontation would not only make Barley's contribution stronger but also open up space for clearer alternatives. The author then would be a 'provocateur' rather than a 'cautious reformist'.

Another example on how to broaden the spectrum of choices is re-metaphorizing the study's relationship to the literature. Barley views earlier research as characterized by 'contradictory evidence as replicated finding' (p. 78). The literature review is thus easily summarized as inconclusive. The metaphor for this is gap-spotting. Earlier studies are deficient in an important sense and therefore require something new/else. However, the text downplays any substantive challenge of existing literature. Instead, Barley portrays his study as relating positively to the community, reassuring the reader that 'to view technology as an occasion for structuring is not to deny the worth of previous work on technology's relation to structure, but rather to modify and specify that work' (p. 106).

The theoretical framework proposed by Barley offers an authoritative source for truth-telling. It allows us to see how the relation between technology and organizational

structure really works, if studied carefully. The structure is mapped and explained by theory emphasizing structuring. However, the major anchoring point for the study is not the theoretical framework but the data. In fact, two-thirds of the article deals with data and modes of dealing with them. The collection and analysis of data are absolutely crucial to the study. The robustness of massive data, very cleverly and diligently handled, gives the study authority. The paper appears to be a true masterpiece of data management.

Above we have just illustrated possible alternatives. Through articulating these *choices*, it is easier to motivate and legitimize deviations from the standardized path (mainly taken by Barley).

Alternative themes for design could suggest work that moves away from the rather strict theory application and data management. If we, inspired by Barley's title, change the view of theory application to an occasion for alternative thinking, we could move from viewing the theory as a means for mapping reality and guide to the truth (providing perfect theory/data fit), to seeing it as a 'lens' giving a selective and sharp picture or inspiring a rich portrayal of the possibly exotic world of radiologists and technicians. Making (some of) the episodes studied into a set of richly constructed events, portrayed in ways allowing the reader to get a feeling for what goes on, including their meanings (considering more fully the views of those studied), could have been an alternative. Here data are less neat objects to be collected and coded than occasions for thick descriptions of encounters between the people at the site, not entirely easy to be reduced to standardized categories. Alternatives to the methodological metaphors of mapping and gathering data and the theoretical ones of distribution, centralization and roles could be respectively portrayed as asymmetries, domination and re-positioning. The latter could be even more opened up, and not as in the paper closed and fixed (at least in specific episodes), by using process thinking and its talk about temporal

subject positions. Rather than 'role negotiations', the material could be addressed as the doings of 'social class work' in the med-tech context. (One could then highlight a strong class element in the relationships and interactions of people studied where radiologists and technicians come out as upper and lower class groups.)

In terms of operative strategy, Barley follows, at least in the article (that gives the reader no reason to believe that the text is anything else than a mirror of the research), established methodology by the book. Participants' interpretations were 'sought and recorded', 'field notes revealed', while observations provided 'raw data for the analysis' (p. 85). Research as a mirror of reality was then the *modus operandi* of the study. Here the formal roles/labels/occupations of radiologists and technicians are taken for granted and invite the portrayal of workplaces populated by units, where the only further differentiation is the degree of experience with the technology. (Gender, age, ethnicity, personal characteristics are never mentioned. Subjects are stripped of human characteristics and come out as one with their occupation.)

An alternative design could also include thinking of elements in the process through metaphors such as empirical material as 'inspirations for insights', 'appealing to intuition', or 'raw material for confessional or impressionistic writing', allowing for richer portrayals (van Maanen, 1988). One could, for example, keep most of the metaphors of the entire RP used by Barley more or less in place, but view data as reality constructions and see writing as telling a personal story of a 'structurationist/negotiated order enthusiast' entering the world of radiology at the time of the introduction of a new technology. Let the drama begin.

In *summary*, the (re-)metaphorization of Barley's study, the tensions between some key metaphors underlying central elements of his research and the set of alternative metaphors of those elements, open up different ways of thinking and doing research about

the technology-structure relation. In the published study, Barley is largely portraying himself as a cautious reformist effectively running the scientific machine: scans the literature and identifies a confusion gap in the sense of contradictory evidence about how technology influences organizational structure; proposes structuring theory as a sharper mirror of reality and as a way to overcome and transcend the perceived contradictory evidence; collects data through close observations and interviews; analyses the data by coding and reducing them to standardized categories; portrays the findings as they mirror reality; and, thus, delivers a significant piece to the theoretical jigsaw puzzle of the technology-structure relation.

In contrast, our *alternative* metaphorization of Barley's study suggests that the researcher could take up the role as a provocateur, trying more strongly to make a specific point rather than trying to tell the truth. Instead of identifying gaps in existing literature to be filled, the provocateur is identifying and challenging some of the assumptions underlying existing literature as flawed and, based on that, providing a set of alternative assumptions that provides a superior inquiry space. Moreover, instead of regarding structuration theory as a mirror of reality in the sense of perfect theory/data fit, the provocateur suggests seeing the theoretical framework more as a lens that offers an interesting but selective perspective of the technology-structure relation. Instead of seeing data as stable building blocks of reality, the provocateur treats it more as ongoing constructions made by research participants and the researchers. Finally, instead of regarding writing as a template for delivering yet another piece to the existing jigsaw puzzle of how technology influences organizational structure, the provocateur uses writing more as a rhetorical exercise and exploration for idea generation and rich stories about the technology-structure relation, perhaps shaking up parts of the MOS community.

Our point here is not to suggest a superior set of metaphors to Barley's, only to

indicate that there are options. Even an exemplary study can be re-thought in interesting ways and inspire not only more of the same but something that stands out as different. Working with alternative metaphors shows how this can be done.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter has been to illuminate the metaphors that guide our understanding of various elements in the research process: overall point of research, researcher's role, literature review, theoretical framework, method, design, data, analysis, writing and contributions. A variety of common and alternative metaphors are summarized in Figure 29.1. The kaleidoscopic of RP metaphors proposed provides a comprehensive overview. Compared to how researchers normally think about research issues, it offers a broader platform for generating more imaginative and engaging research. In particular, the proposed spectrum of RP metaphors and associated guiding principles offer a *meta-approach* rather than a specific methodology for generating more imaginative and engaging research. Most existing methodologies suggest a specific path from 'a' to 'b', e.g. moving from gap-spotting to problematization (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013), or focusing on problem-oriented rather than theory-developing research (Corley & Gioia, 2011). Instead of going from 'a' to 'b', the proposed kaleidoscope of RP metaphors acknowledges that there is a spectrum from 'a' to 'n' RP elements to consider and perhaps further develop. In other words, rather than focusing on a single RP element, we encourage the researcher to work on a meta-level with a variety of metaphors, as well as going back and forth between these, and then choose the one(s) that appears to offer the best support to say something new or, alternatively, develop new one(s) that can provide better support for something new in the

specific case of research. The researcher needs of course to carefully integrate the (novel, unconventional) understandings with established knowledge/theory and consider reasonable ways of using empirical material and writing in such a way that is understood by the intended audience.

The proposed kaleidoscope of RP metaphors is not intended to be an instruction manual. Instead, the very idea is that the researcher must think through issues and make more broadly considered choices, which is the opposite of offering strict guidelines. There is no formula for being more imaginative in research. Our ambition with this chapter is to encourage moves that bring more 'life' into academic work through metaphorizing RP. It means both to identify and wake up common and 'dead' metaphors and target them for reflection, and to identify and mobilize some alternative metaphors that open up possibilities to do research in more varied and imaginative ways. Our pluralistic and promiscuous kaleidoscope of RP metaphors – a hypermarket of metaphorical possibilities – aims to point at the wealth of options, rather than to follow the conventional, narrow route of 'adding to the literature' through a focused and limited message carving out a small piece of novelty.

Metaphors are an excellent, although far from unproblematic, reference point in dealing with and bringing out more creativity and imagination. With a playful metaphorization of the entire RP or selected parts of it, we can perhaps become a bit less dull, predictable and cautious. Increasing the joys of doing research (or search) and, perhaps even more urgent, of reading the fruits (or deliveries) of it appears to be important for coming up with more imaginative ideas and stimulating research texts. This is not to deny the need for rigour, discipline and credibility, but we are less concerned about these qualities in the present chapter. 'Rigour' often means sticking to conventions and reproducing taken-for-granted assumptions (relying on dead metaphors) and treating data at face value.

Imagination and novelty are hardly visible virtues in contemporary published research. One rarely gets surprised or encouraged to think more than marginally differently when reading academic articles. What is badly needed is more imagination and creativity in the development of ideas, understandings of the research process and forms of writing.

Note

- 1 Although this point may seem to be a bit 'wild', our intention is not to neglect conventional academic concerns about relating to earlier work. Idea-picking literature reviews would differ from conventional, 'vacuum-cleaning' dittos, but include elements such as the covering of important works in the focal area and making sure there is an ongoing dialogue with existing studies such as relating one's results to existing literature.

REFERENCES

- Alvesson, M. (2011). *Interpreting Interviews*. London: Sage.
- Alvesson, M. & Deetz, S. (2000). *Doing Critical Management Research*. London: Sage
- Alvesson, M. & Kärreman, D. (2011). *Qualitative Research and Theory Development: Mystery as Method*. London: Sage.
- Alvesson, M. & Sandberg, J. (2013). *Constructing Research Questions: Doing Interesting Research*. London: Sage.
- Alvesson, M. & Sandberg, J. (2014). Habitat and habitus: Boxed-in versus box-breaking research. *Organization Studies*, 35(7), 967–87.
- Alvesson, M. & Sköldborg, K. (2009). *Reflexive Methodology*. London: Sage.
- Alvesson, M., Hardy, C. & Harley, B. (2008). Reflecting on reflexivity: Reappraising practice. *Journal of Management Studies*, 45(3), 480–501.
- Barley, S. R. (1986). Technology as an occasion for structuring: Evidence from observations of CT scanners and the social order of radiology departments. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 31(1), 78–108.

- Bartunek, J. M., Rynes, S. L. & Ireland, D. R. (2006). What makes management research interesting, and why does it matter? *Academy of Management Journal*, 49(1), 9–15.
- Baudrillard, J. (1994). *Simulacra and Simulation*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Bono, J. E. & McNamara, G. (2011). Publishing in AMJ: Part 2: Research design. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54(4), 657–60.
- Brinkmann, S. (2014). Doing without data. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20(6), 720–5.
- Brown, R. H. (1976). Social theory as metaphor. *Theory and Society*, 3(2), 169–97.
- Burrell, G. & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis*. London: Heinemann.
- Childers, S. M. (2014). Promiscuous analysis in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20(6), 819–26.
- Corley, K. G. & Gioia, D. A. (2011). Building theory about theory building: What constitutes a theoretical contribution? *Academy of Management Review*, 36(1), 12–32.
- Cornelissen, J. P. (2005). Beyond compare: Metaphor in organization theory. *Academy of Management Review*, 30(4), 751–64.
- Cornelissen, J. P. & Durand, R. (2014). Moving forward: Developing theoretical contributions in management studies. *Journal of Management Studies*, 51(6), 995–1022.
- Cornelissen, J. P. & Kafouros, M. (2008). Metaphors and theory building in organization theory: What determines the impact of a metaphor on theory? *British Journal of Management*, 19(4), 365–79.
- Cornelissen, J. P., Osrick, C., Christensen, L. T. & Phillips, N. (2008). Metaphor in organizational research: Context, modalities and implications for research – Introduction. *Organization Studies*, 29(1), 7–22.
- Davis, M. S. (1971). That's interesting! Towards a phenomenology of sociology and a sociology of phenomenology. *Philosophy of Social Sciences*, 1(4), 309–44.
- Ferraro, F., Pfeffer, J. & Sutton, R. (1993). Economics language and assumptions: How theories can become self-fulfilling. *Academy of Management Review*, 30(1), 8–23.
- Flick, U. (2006). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 3rd edn. London: Sage.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon.
- Gabriel, Y. (2010). Organization studies: A space for ideas, identities and agonies. *Organization Studies*, 31(6), 757–75.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- George, G. (2014). From the editors: Rethinking management scholarship. *Academy of Management Journal*, 57(1), 1–6.
- Ghoshal, S. (2005). Bad management theories are destroying good management practices. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 4(1), 75–91.
- Gibbs, R. W. (Ed) (2008). *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. New York: Aldine De Gruyter.
- Grant, D. & Osrick, C. (Eds) (1996). *Metaphor and Organizations*. London: Sage.
- Grey, C. (2010). Organizing studies: Publications, politics and polemics. *Organization Studies*, 31(6), 677–94.
- Grey, C. & Sinclair, A. (2006). Writing differently. *Organization*, 13(3), 443–53.
- Gunning, T. (1997). From the kaleidoscope to the X-ray: Urban spectatorship, Poe, Benjamin, and Traffic in Souls (1913). *Wide Angle*, 19(4), 25–61.
- Hardy, C., & Clegg, S. (1997). Relativity without relativism: Reflexivity in post-paradigm organization studies. *British Journal of Management*, 8(S1), 5–17.
- Illes, L. M. & Ritchie, J. B. (1999). Change metaphor: Grappling with the two-headed organizational behemoth. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 8(1), 91–100.
- Knights, D. & Morgan, G. (1991). Corporate strategy, organizations, and subjectivity: A Critique. *Organization Studies*, 12(2), 251–73.
- Kuhn, T. (1970). *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Kunda, G. (1992). *Engineering Culture*. Pennsylvania, PA: Temple University Press.
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors We Live by*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

- Locke, K. & Golden-Biddle, K. (1997). Constructing opportunities for contribution: Structuring intertextual coherence and 'problematizing' in organizational studies. *Academy of Management Journal*, 40(5), 1023–62.
- Morgan, G. (1980). Paradigms, metaphors and puzzle solving in organization theory. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 25(4), 605–22.
- Morgan, G. (1983). More on metaphor: Why we cannot control tropes in administrative science. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28(3), 601–8.
- Morgan, G. (1986). *Images of Organization*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Morgan, G. (1996). An afterword: Is there anything more to be said about metaphors?, in Grant, D. & Osrick, C. (Eds), *Metaphor and Organizations*. London: Sage.
- Pinder, C. & Bourgeois, V. (1982). Controlling tropes in administrative science. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 27(4), 641–52.
- Potter, J. & Wetherell, M. (1987) *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour*. London: Sage.
- Putnam, L. L. & Boys, S. (2006). Revisiting metaphors of organizational communication, in Clegg, S. R., Hardy, C. T., Lawrence, B. and Nord, W. R. (Eds), *The Sage Handbook of Organization Studies*. London: Sage.
- Reed, M. (1990). From paradigms to images: The paradigm warrior turns post-modernist guru. *Personnel Review*, 19(3), 35–40.
- Richardson, L. (2000). Writing: A method of inquiry, in Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (Eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ricoeur, P. (1978). Metaphor and the main problem of hermeneutics, in *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Rosen, M. (1985). Breakfast at Spiro's. *Journal of Management*, 11(2), 31–48.
- Schön, D. (1979). Generative metaphor: A perspective on problem-setting in social policy, in Ortony, A. (Ed), *Metaphor and Thought*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Sekaran, U. (2000). *Research Method for Business: A Skill Building Approach*. New York: John Wiley.
- Silverman, D. (2006). *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, 3rd ed. London: Sage.
- Solnit, R. (2001). *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*. London: Verso.
- Starbuck, W. H. (2006). *The Production of Knowledge: The Challenge of Social Science Research*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Steen, G. J., Dorst, A. G., Herrmann, J. B., Kaal, A., Krennmayr, T. & Pasma, T. (2010). *A Method for Linguistic Metaphor Identification*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Suddaby, R., Hardy, S. & Huy, Q. N. (2011). Introduction to special topic forum: Where are the new theories of organization? *Academy of Management Review*, 36(2), 236–46.
- van Maanen, J. (1988). *Tales of the Field*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Weick, K. E. (1989). Theory construction as disciplined imagination. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 516–31.
- Weick, K. E. (1992). Agenda setting in organizational behavior: A theory-focused approach. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 1(3), 171–82.
- Wray-Bliss, E. (2002). Abstract ethics, embodied ethics: The strange marriage of Foucault and positivism in labour process theory. *Organization*, 9(1), 5–39.

Index

Locators prefixed by 'B' refer to boxes; those in *italics* refer to figures.

- Academy of Management (AoM)* 36, 39, 76, 432, 438, 493, 499
access (accessability) 38, 212, 249, 284, 287, 387, 457–8
accountability 90, 146–7
accounts 232, 276, 365
Acevedo, B. 266
actions (actionability) 71, 92, 213, 300, 419
actor-networks 437–9, 444
Actor Network Theory (ANT) 134–5, 431, 437
actors (actants) 33, 53, 153, 181, 284, 301, 354
 ANTi-history 436–7, 439, 440–2
 discourses 83–5
 drama 172, 175
 QCA 417, 419
 sociomateriality 135, 138, 144–5
Adamson, Edward 264
aesthetics 185, 244, 347–8, 366–8
 multisensory research 363–4
 scent 358–61
 touch 361–3
 visual 352–7
 working complexities 348–52
Aesthetic Understanding of Organizational Life 354
Africville 441–2, 444–5
agency 135, 137, 138, 140, 144, 255
Age of Theory 469
age, workers 282, 287, 289–290, 291, 292, 338
Air Canada 443–4
Alcadipani, R. 103–4, 107, 110
Alexander, B. K. 174, 178
Alfoldi, Eva A. 415, 468
alteration (social interactions) 387
Althusser, L. 52, 87, 92–3
Alvesson, M. 52, 65, 69, 74, 104–6, 155
 metaphors 489, 492–4, 499
ambiguity 73, 90, 179, 374, 416
ambivalence 378
American Dream 332
amodernism 42–3
analysis 289–293, 317, 351–2, 387, 494–5
 compositional 318–19
 drawing 264, 271–3
Anderson, L. 19–20, 23
Angels 403
animations 152–3, 155–63 *see also* fiction
anonymity 24, 27, 75, 253, 392
Another Brick in the Wall 403
antenarrative 67
anthropology 66, 240, 245, 331
anthropomorphism 145
ANTi-History 431–2, 433–5
 actor-networks 437–9
 histories as performance 440–2
 history as multiply performances 444–5
 multiplicity in history 442–4
 new directions 445–7
 past-as-history 432–7
 relational histories 439–40
anxiety 68, 270
archival materials 36–41, 176, 241
archival research 32–4, 387
 amodernism 36
 collection and storage 38–9
 modernism 34–5
 postmodernism 35–6
Aristotle 50, 52–3, 55, 65, 87, 488
Armstrong, D. A. 67, 243
Art as Experience 365
artifacts (object of convenience) 135, 141, 275, 353–4, 357
artistic portrait, as metaphor 494
artists 161, 365
art therapy 264–5, 274, 276
Asain Dub Foundation 405
Ashcraft, K. L. 86–7, 90, 93, 104–6, 136, 140–2, 145–7
assumption digging, as metaphor 492
asymmetries, as metaphor 501
atmospheres 147, 176
attachment 159
attitude-behaviour gap 481
attribution 138, 289
audiences 87, 90, 153, 209, 292, 403
 drama 171–2, 175, 177–8, 182
 film making 332–4, 338–9
 multimodality 304, 308
 rhetoric 49, 51, 53–5
audio presentations 462–3
audit trails 223, 224
auteur theory 317
authenticity 55, 336, 362, 419
 archival research 39–41, 43
 drawing 263, 275
 web images 285, 287
authority 27, 53, 94, 264, 275, 451
authors (authorship) 40, 337

- autoethnographers 19, 23
- autoethnography 24–7, 28–9, 350, 400
 - analytical 20
 - definition 17–18
 - dramaturgical and poetic 21–2
 - ethical dilemmas 24, 27
 - evocative 19
 - forms 18–22
 - interactive forms and epistemological approaches 22–4
 - interpretive and critical 22
 - reflexivity 28
- auto-netnography 394
- backfilling 197
- back stage 175, 209
- Baetens, J. 286, 288, 290–1
- Bailey, J. 288, 291
- Baily, J. 400–1
- Balogun, J. 190, 452
- Barad, K. 93, 133–8, 144–6
- Barley, S. R. 499–501
- Baron, R. A. 300, 309
- Barrett, M. 137, 141, 145–6
- Barthes, R. 64, 70, 250, 286
- Baxter, L. F. 350–2, 359–61
- Beane, M. 139, 144
- Bebop 406
- Becker, Howard Saul 240, 245, 414–15
- becoming 135, 439
- Beech, Nic 50, 405, 412
- behaviours 190, 194, 353–4
 - interpersonal 333
- being 135
- beliefs 159
- Bell, E. 52, 240, 263, 282–285, 299, 325
 - senses 348, 353, 366–7
- Ben-Ari, A. 111
- Bennett, A. 40, 42
- Berg, B. L. 38, 40
- Berger, J. 243, 249
- Betts, J. 240, 246, 252
- betweenness 457
- Beynon, H. 73, 240
- bias 38–39, 75, 143, 264, 462
 - film making 337, 340
- Biberman, G. 270–1
- Biehl-Missal, B. 175, 176, 182, 366
- Biennale of Contemporary Art Exhibition 320–1, 323–4
- bilingualism 443
- bi-musicality 401, 408
- Birch, Peter A. C. 180–1
- Blackler, F. 214, 409
- blogs 388
- Boal, A. 172, 177
- Bochner, Art P. 19, 21, 462
- Boden, D. 83, 85, 91
- bodies 86, 135–6
- bodily positions (movements) 300, 308, 401
- body of collage 315–316, 321–4
- Boje, D. M. 24, 64–5, 67, 73, 92, 173, 179
- Bolger, N. 192, 195, 196–7
- Boolean algebra 416–18
- Boole, George 416
- Booth, C. 33, 432
- Booth, Wayne 50
- bosses 161
- bottom-of-the-pyramid (BOP) 475, 478
- boundary spanning 211
- ‘boundary walker’ 404–5
- Bourdieu, P. 21, 134, 275
- Bowles, M. 70–1
- Bramming, P. 242, 246, 251
- brands 69, 256, 283–4, 365, 386, 393
- Braun, Virginia 221, 224, 227–8, 230, 231, 234–5
- Brecht, Robert 438
- British Psychological Society 198
- Broadfoot, K. 85–86
- Brooks, Joanna 220–1, 224, 226, 230–1, 233
- Broussine, M. 270, 274
- Brown, A. D. 91, 406, 452
 - rhetoric 52–3, 55
 - stories 65, 68–9
- Brown, J. S. 85–6
- Brown, R. H. 487, 520
- Bruner, J. 64, 91–92
- Brunswick, Egon 469–70
- Brush, C. G. 300, 309
- Bryman, Alan 52, 204, 374, 432
- Buchanan, David 240–2, 333, 374
- bullying 24, 68
- Burke, Kenneth 50, 53–4, 87, 91, 173, 179–82
- Burrell, G. 86, 135, 144, 348, 469, 487
- Burris, M. A. 241–2, 249
- Burton, Sir Thomas 265
- Business Angel 301
- business pitches *see* pitches, business
- Butler, Judith 86, 153–4, 164
- Butler-Kisber, L. 314–17
- Cagle, C. 334, 339
- Calás, M. 376, 437, 441
- Calder, B. J. 119–20, 122, 124
- Callon, M. 134–5, 137, 437
- cameras 241, 330–2, 341
- Campbell, Donald T. 470
- capitalism 69, 86, 158, 160, 162–3, 393
- captions 248, 288
- Carroll, Lewis 51
- Carroll, N. 316, 323
- case-oriented approach 417
- Cassell, Catherine 221, 223–4, 229–30, 251
 - diaries 190–3, 196
 - interviews 104–6, 108, 112

- Catalani, C. 243, 249, 251
category work 83
causality (causal conditions) 57, 146–9, 180–1, 426–7, 472
centralization 56, 500
Chambers, D. 329, 331
change, initiation of 66
change management 375, 452
character, good 55, 57
characters 171
 fiction 153, 155–6, 161, 163
 stories 64, 67, 70, 73
charting 228–9
chastising effect 68
Chicago, Judy 373–4
children (pets) 156, 264, 360
 ‘pets’ 159
Chong, M. K. 196, 199
Christianson, M. 92, 325, 452
Cinderella 154, 157, 159, 161
Cinderella 156–7, 159
citationality 161
Clarke, Jean 299–300, 333, 339
Clarke, Victoria 221, 227–8, 230, 231, 234–5
closure 91, 92
Cloud, D. L. 86, 90, 93
clusters 225, 480
codes (coding schemes) 85, 155, 302, 376, 391
 emotions 460–1
 group methods 120–1, 124
 interviews 107
 metaphors 500
 photography 252
 senses 352, 359
 sociomateriality 144
 thematic analysis 220, 223, 225, 227–8, 230
coding themes (films) 167
Coghlan, D. 107, 456
Cole, D. 171, 185
collaboration 107, 272, 337, 402
collages 264, 313–15
 analysis 317–19, 325
 heuristic analysis 320–4
 juxtapositions and metaphors 315–7
 research context data collection 320
 summary analysis 325
collagists 316, 317, 321, 322 *see also* artists
Coller, K. E. 36, 40, 445
Collier, J. 239, 245–6, 253, 301
Collier, M. 239, 245–6, 301
Collinson, D. 68, 73, 84
colonization (colonialism) 387, 444
commentaries 251–2
commitment 197, 249
communication 90, 147, 333, 356, 402, 453
 discourses 83, 85, 93–4
 non-verbal 265
 web images 285, 288
communication as constitutive organization (CCO) 93–4
communication, embodied 298–9, 308–9
 business pitches 303–8
 data collection 301–3
 entrepreneurs 299–301
communities 53, 263, 410, 475
 music 404–5
 online fans 389
communities of practice 71, 406
Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) 225, 339, 480
concept maps (visualisations) 472–3, 478–81, 482
conduct, ethical 254
confidence building 270
confidentiality 72, 75
conflict 93, 276
 diaries 190, 192–3
 drama 175, 178
 stories 65, 67–8
conformity 66, 68
connections 134, 139
cononicity 91
Conquergood, D. 451, 463
consciousness, raising 193
consensus 59, 86, 93
consent 253, 254–5, 341
considerations 190
constitutive rhetoric 87, 90
constraints 475, 478
constructivism 105
consumerism 24
consumers 122, 314, 320, 332, 393, 481
containment 378
content 83, 121, 285, 337
 analysis 284, 317, 339, 389, 390–1
context 90–91, 270–1, 287, 391–2, 417
 cultural 21
 emotions 455, 460
 multicultural 351
 pattern matching 470, 475
 sociomateriality 137, 144
contextualist 221
contrasts 303, 305, 306, 308
control 50, 120, 141
conversations 124, 331, 403 *see also* discourses
 analysis 90–1, 301–2, 339
Cook, S. D. N. 85–6
Cooren, François 83–7, 90–4
copyrights 267
Corbett, M. 353, 358
Corbin, J. 198, 221
Cornelissen, Joep 90, 300, 315–19, 323, 487–8
Corner, J. 330–1
corporate attitudes 35
corporate code of ethics (CCE) 142
corporate culture 271

- corporate practices 35
- corporate presentations 176
- corporate social responsibility (CRS) 284, 480
- Corrigan, L. 441–2, 444–5
- Costas, J. 69, 216
- costumes 154
- Coule, Tracey, M. 119, 121, 122, 125, 126, 128
- Coupland, C. 69, 284, 452
- couples, dual-earner 191, 194
- crafting 264
- creative compliance 254
- creativity 488
- credibility 39, 43, 451
- crises 158, 162–3, 173, 179
- crisp set qualitative comparative analysis (csQCA) 415–17
- critical visual methodology framework 274
- critical discourse analysis (CDA) 92–93
- criticality 263
- critical visual methodology framework 273
- Croghan, R. 243, 251
- Cross, K. 265, 274–5, 277
- Cross Purposes* 377, 378
- cultural fluency 391
- cultural images 271
- cultural texts 289
- cultures 23, 39, 135, 400, 404, 459
 - corporate 271
 - organizational 90, 353
 - senses 351
 - sewing 382
 - stories 65
 - visual 243, 264
 - western 160
- Cunliffe, Ann L. 103–4, 107, 110, 325, 452, 457
- Cunningham, W. A. 451–2
- customers 184, 419
- Czarniawska, B. 91–2, 155–6, 206, 213, 275, 362
 - stories 64–5, 68
- Czarniawska-Joerges, B. 71, 172–3, 175, 362

- Dale, K. 86, 348, 367
 - sociomateriality 135–6, 139, 141, 144, 146
- Daley, Robert 437
- Dalley, T. 264–5, 274
- data 120–1, 223, 225, 228
 - archival research 33, 40
 - calibration 425
 - co-created data 390
 - construction 472
 - diversity of 382
 - drama 173
 - drawing 273, 276–7
 - metaphors 494, 501–2
 - naturally occurring 52, 54–8
 - replicability and transparency 418–19
 - security 255
 - senses 355
 - shadowing 213–14
 - text 359
 - transfer 416
 - web images 293
- data analysis 53, 220, 251, 271, 364
 - drama 176, 182
 - emotions 460–1
 - film making 339–40
 - netnography 390–2
 - sociomateriality 144–6
- data collection 207, 270, 331, 353, 390–1
 - diaries 190–1, 194, 197, 199
 - drama 176, 181
 - interviews 106, 111
 - netnography 390–2
 - sociomateriality 138–44
 - stories 65, 72–3
- data indexing 124–5
- data mining 389–90
- data patterns 470
- datasets 386, 389
- Davis, D. 314–18
- Davis, Keith 39
- Davis, Miles 407
- Davison, J. 263, 347–8, 353, 366–7
 - photography 240, 253
 - web images 283–4, 291
- Davis, Ralph 438
- deception 49, 110, 157–8
- Decker, S. 43, 444
- Deetz, S. A. 84, 493
- de-familiarization, as metaphor 493
- Delgaudio, S. 334, 337
- Denzin, N. K. 18, 27, 174–5, 366, 451
 - interviews 105, 107, 110
- dependency 134
- desires 68, 314
- deviation 54
- diachronicity 91
- diagnosis, clinical 118
- dialogue 252, 337, 365, 418, 419
- diaries 188–9, 190–4, 199, 267, 359
 - designing 195–6
 - designing study 194–8
 - future 199
 - overview 189–90
 - research challenges 194–8
- diary apps 196, 199
- Diem-Wille, G. 264–5
- Digital Brain Switch 199
- digital netnography 394, 395
- dignity 255
- Dinner Party, The* 372, 373, 379
- disabled (people) 53
- discipline 65, 68, 84
- disciplined imagination, as metaphor 494

- disclaimers 255
- disclosure 27, 73–4, 198, 392
- discomfort 179
- discourses 84, 93–4, 318–19
- discrimination 68, 338
- discussions 250, 283, 292, 351, 365
 - drawing 264, 270, 273–4
- dismissal 68
- dissemination 66, 227, 247–9, 332
- distribution 138–9, 500
- diversity 50, 459–60
- documentary filmmaking (documentaries) 329–30, 341–2
 - data analysis 339–40
 - key approaches 334–9
 - practical considerations 340–1
 - as research 330–3
- Doloriert, C. 19, 24
- domination, as metaphor 501
- drama 21, 107, 118, 179
- dramaturgical research methods 170–1
 - dramatistic pentad 179–82
 - framework 173–4, 182–4
 - life and theatre interdependency 178–9
 - life as theatre 175–7
 - life like theatre 174–5
 - life revealed 177–8
 - theatre 171–3
- drawing 262–3, 264–6, 277–8
 - benefits 273–6
 - challenges in research 276–7
 - participants-led 267–73
 - in research 266–7
 - visual turn 263–4
- drawings 273–6
 - in research 266–7
- Drew, S. 252, 263, 265, 275, 277
- Duberley, J. 119, 127, 188
- Duff, W. 194, 196
- Durepos, Gabrielle 33, 40, 42, 432, 436–7, 440, 442–6
- Dutton, J. E. 157–8, 461
- duty of care 110, 278
- dysfunction 178

- Eckenrode, J. 192, 195
- Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) 263
- economies, hidden 376, 378
- editing, digital 286–7, 336
- education 265, 331–2, 333
- educational providers 50
- Eisner, Micheal 160–1
- elderly (people) 53
- elicitation 332, 351, 353, 364, 367, 390 *see also*
 - photo-elicitation
- Ellington, Duke 406–7, 410
- Ellis, Carolyn 19, 21, 27, 456
- emancipation 127–8, 249
- emblems 284 *see also* brands; logos
- embodiment 135–6, 361, 401–2, 408, 452
- embroidery 373–4, 377–9, B380 *see also* sewing
- Emmison, M. 264, 283–4
- emojis 386
- emotional distance 270
- emotional diversity 459–60
- emotional labour 364
- emotions 53, 68, 401, 450–2
 - analysis 459–61
 - diaries 191, 193, 198
 - drawing 264–5, 272, 274–5, 277–8
 - film making 338
 - photography 250
 - presentation 461–3
 - reflexivity and subjectivity 456–7
 - research design 457–8
 - sensemaking 452–3
 - senses 358
 - as tools 453–5
- empathy 108, 459, 462
- empirical research 358–9
- employees 24, 68, 69, 355
- employment 155, 376
- enactments 143, 144, 146, 440–2
- Engeström, Y. 210, 409
- Enoch, G. 111
- entanglement 136, 141
- enthymemes 53, 55–6, 57
- entrepreneurs (entrepreneurship) 65, 299–300, 301, 420
- environmentalism 127
- environments 301, 419, 470
- espoused theory 210
- Esterberg, K. G. 37–8, 40
- ethics 22, 75–6, 198, 223–4, 333, 480
 - committees 254
 - drama 185
 - drawing 264, 272, 275–7
 - netnography 392–3
 - photography 251, 253–5
 - senses 357, 362
 - sewing 386–7
 - shadowing 212
- ethnodrama 177–8
- ethnography 139, 178, 263, 367, 386, 400
 - emotions 451, 462
 - film making 332–3, 340
 - stories 66, 73
- ethnomethodology 90–1
- ethnomethodology informed conversation analysis (EMCA) 90–1
- ethnomusicology 398, 410–12
 - autoethnography 405–7
 - community work 404–5
 - context 399–400
 - definitions 399
 - factory work 403–4

- fieldwork 400–3
 - practice and participation 405–7
- ethos 52–3, 55, 57, 87
- evaluation 39, 284
- events 190, 191, 198, 417
- Every Breath You Take* 404
- evidence 33, 330
- evocation 330
- exegesis 365
- experiences 65, 190, 191, 382
- exploitation 110
- exploration, as metaphor 495
- expository approach (filmmaking) 334
- eye opener, as metaphor 493
- Eyes on the Prize* 334, 339
- facial expressions 300–1, 459
- facilitation 190
- Fairhurst, Gail T. 83–5, 91–3, 95
- fairness 190, 192
- fairy godmothers 159
- fairy tales 156
- fantasies 68, 154
- fear 68
- feelings 190, 270, 272, 314 *see also* emotions
- femininity 160, 373
- feminism 127, 272, 373–4, 377–8, 451, 453
- fiction 152–3, 163–4
 - Butler and gender 153–5
 - coding themes 167
 - contemporary Disney 160–3
 - Disney and women's work 156–60
 - film list 165–6
 - methodology 155–6
- field notes 139, 228, 352, 364, 390
 - border control agent 453–5
- field relations 249
- fieldwork 266–7, 267, 352, 387–8, 400–3, 407–8
 - methods 351
- fieldwork sites 350, 352, 360–1, 364, 386, 388
- film list 165–6
- filmmakers 336
- Fisher, J. A. 209, 214
- flashbacks 334
- Fleming, P. 68–9, 84, 374
- flexibility 190, 193, 230
- flows of translation 135
- focus
 - archival source lists 37
 - histories 37–8
- focus groups 270, 453
- followers 175, 184
- Ford, D. J. 52, 87
- Ford, Henry 41
- formats 241, 252, 287
- formats, social media 388
- Forum Conversations (FCs) 181–2
- Forum Theatre 177
- Foucault, M. 34–5, 154, 432
 - discourses 84, 92
 - metaphors 492, 496
- Fox, C. 179, 180–1, 182
- Framework Analysis 228–9
- Freud, Sigmund 265
- front stage 175, 209
- Frost, P. J. 66, 157
- Frozen* 161–3
- functionalism 470
- funding 206, 254, 340
- Furgerson, S. P. 104, 107–8
- fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA)
 - 415–17, 419–20
 - application example 425–7
- Gabriel, Y. 65, 68, 70, 73–5, 94, 243, 404
- Gallo, M. 240, 249
- gap-spotting, as metaphor 500
- gaze 300
 - organizational actors 355–6
 - researcher's 353–5
- Gemignani, M. 460, 463
- gender 23, 35, 86, 190–1, 250, 460
 - ANTI-history 444
 - fiction 153–5, 160–1, 163, 167
 - web images 284, 290, 292
- Gender Trouble* 153
- Genette, G. 207–8
- George, A. L. 40, 42
- gestures 300, 301, 305, 307–8 *see also* hand movements
 - (gesticulation)
- Gill, A. 50–1
- Gill, R. 205, 209
- globalization 84, 93
- goal-setting 190
- Gobo, Giampietro 112–13
- Goffman, Erving 107, 209, 266
 - drama 172, 174–5, 179, 181
- Golden-Biddle, K. 263, 492
- Goldin-Meadow 300–1
- good character 55, 57
- Grant, A. 19, 23–4
- Grant, D. 83–4, 174–5, 488
- Greatbatch, D. 47, 128, 303
- Green, A. S. 196, 199
- Green, S. E. 83, 90
- Greimas, A. J. 91, 94
- Grounded Theory 177, 221, 400, 460, 478
- grounded visual pattern analysis 253
- group methods 117–19
 - interpretivism 122–7
 - neo-positivism 119–21
 - research 127–9
- groups 65, 120, 270
- Guba, E. 118, 263, 275, 453

- guesswork, intelligent, as metaphor 495
- Guillemin, M. 252, 263, 265–7, 270–7
- Halford, S. 86, 246
- Hamilton, Peter 52–4, 332
- Hampe, B. 330–1
- Hancock, P. 246, 347–8, 350, 361
- Handless Maiden, The* 362
- hand movements (gesticulation) 300, 302, 306
- Haraway, D. 135, 144–5, 148
- Hargreaves, D. J. 399–400, 404
- harm 198, 254–5, 336, 393
- Harper, D. 240, 245
- Hartt, C. M. 36, 432, 443–6
- Harvey, A. 175
- Harvey, W. S. 104, 108, 109, 111
- Hassard, J. 437
- Hatch, M. J. 72, 208
- Haynes, Kathryn 23–4, 27–8, 120, 122, 128, 451–3
- health 265–6, 267, 275, 276, 277, 331
- Heath, C. 301, 333, 339, 341
- Helms Mills, Jean 34, 36, 245, 439
- Henley, P. 339–41
- Hepburn, A. 128, 208, 232
- Heritage, J. 90–1, 303, 339
- heuristic analysis 319–24
- hierarchies 264, 272, 336, 405
- Higgins, L. 399–400, 404
- high reliability organizations (HROs) 83–4
- Hill, Adrian 264
- historians 436
- history 34–5, 431–2, 445–7 *see also* narratives; stories
- actor-networks 437–9
 - multiple performances 444–5
 - multiplicity 442–4
 - organizational 376–8
 - past as 432–7
 - as performance 440–2
 - relational 439–40
 - written 41–2
- Hockney, David 252
- Hoffman, M. F. 52, 87
- Hsieh, H. F. 460–1
- humanist netnography 394, 395
- Human Relations School 436
- human resources management (HRM) 49–51
- human rights 480
- humiliation 68
- humour 73, 84
- Humphreys, M. 68–9, 158, 405–7, 452
- autoethnography 19, 22, 24, 27
- Hunchback of Notre Dame, The* 158
- Hyde, Paula B381
- Hyle, A. E. 263, 265, 270–1, 274, 276–7
- hyphens 439
- iceberg model 376
- idea generation, as metaphor 495
- ideaology 92
- idea-picking, as metaphor 492
- identity 22–4, 50, 90, 124, 146, 403–4, 417
- brand 256
 - collages 320, 322
 - drawing 265, 271
 - fiction 153, 163
 - multiple 92, 320, 324
 - narratives 69–70, 71, 75
 - netnography 386, 392
 - photography 243, 252–3
- identitätscape 252
- I Don't Like Mondays* 403
- Iedema, R. 339
- illness 24
- images 139–40, 265, 271, 390
- analysis 253
 - organizational 90
 - properties 286–7
 - status 288–9
 - uses 287–8
 - visual 386
- image/text 248
- imagination, free, as metaphor 495
- imagination (imaginings) 74, 171, 244, 496
- immersion 20, 27, 249, 331, 386, 389
- impact 193, 195
- impressions 174, 175, 246
- improvisation 211, 406
- indexing (data) 228
- inductive coding 227
- inequality 41, 112
- informants 177–8, 320 *see also* audiences
- informed consent 212–213
- Ingold, T. 136, 138, 142
- innovation 65, 420
- inputs (input elements) 490–2
- insight generators, as metaphor 492
- insights 210, 229, 402, 408, 425
- emotions 451, 456
 - senses 356–7, 365
- insights, inspirations for, as metaphor 501
- interactants 90 *see also* actors (actants); participants
- interactions 83, 124, 210, 402
- interactive media 386
- inter-coder comparison 223
- interconnectedness 317
- International Visual Sociology Association 254
- internet 199, 282, 285
- inter-organizational studies 452
- interpretations 155, 227, 272, 351, 353, 356, 382
- Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) 221
- interpretivism 105, 122–7
- intersubjectivity 302, 349

- intertextuality 319
- interviewees 110, 208 *see also* participants
- interviewers 111–12 *see also* researchers
- interviews 52, 85, 102–4, 139, 213–14, 228 *see also*
 - discourses
 - data 425
 - diaries 194–5, 197–8
 - drawing 270, 273, 275
 - emotions 453
 - ethnomusicology 408
 - film making 331, 337–8
 - pattern matching 475
 - photography 241, 250
 - political dimensions 109–13
 - protocols 45
 - senses 351, 353–6, 359–60, 364
 - social dimensions 107–9
 - technical dimensions 104–7
- intra-action 134
- intrusiveness 75
- intuition, appealing to, as metaphor 501
- inventory function 245–6
- investigators 471 *see also* researchers
- investment pitches *see* pitches, business
- investors 300
- invisibility 376, 379
- inVisio* (International Network for Visual Studies in Organizations) 240, 254, 263
- I will Survive* 403, 408

- Jacob, S. A. 104, 107–8
- Jamison, Charles 438
- jazz music 405–6
- Jefferson, G. 301–2
- Jefferson, T. 65, 74
- Jenkins, K. 432, 436–7
- Jensen, T. 135, 137, 139–40, 142, 274
- Jewkes, Y. 460, 463
- Jobs, Steve 175
- Johnson, G. 190, 452
- Johnson, M. 317, 487
- Johnson, P. 120, 122–4
- Jones, M. 138–9, 143
- Journal of Business Research* 415, 420, T421–4
- Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 188
- Journal of Organizational Behavior* 188
- journeys, as metaphor 493
- Jungle Book, The* 156–7
- juxtapositions 315–17, 319, 321–4
 - aesthetic 356–7

- Kanter, E. M. 154, 157–9
- Kaplan, S. J. 145, 323
- Kara, H. 263, 451, 453, 456–7, 462
- Karreman, D. 52, 65

- Kearney, K. S. 263, 265, 270–1, 276–7
- Kearney, R. 64, 67
- Kezar, A. 103, 105, 111–12, 459
- Kieser, Alfred 34–5
- Kilgard, A. K. 315, 318–19
- King, N. 220, 221, 223, 224, 225, 226
- Kirkland, t. 451–2
- Kitzinger, J. 119, 124, 127
- Kjellman-Chapin, M. 313–15, 318
- knowing 135, 177, 273
- knowledge 71–2, 84, 119–22, 135, 210, 419
 - archival research 33, 35, 41
 - creation 452–3
 - film making 330–1, 333, 337–8, 348, 350
 - metaphors 488, 490, 500
 - photography 243
 - senses 352, 356, 357
 - tacit 314, 406, 456–7
- Koch, Sigmund 469
- Korczynski, M. 363, 403–4, 408
- Kostera, M. 70, 206
- Kozinets, Robert V. 386–9, 392–5
- Kress, G. R. 247, 291, 300–1, 318
- Kvale, Steinar 103, 110, 469

- labour (work) 156, 161, 332 *see also* work
 - cognitive 437
 - sweated 373
- Lady and the Tramp* 157, 160
- language 54, 147, 263, 359, 453, 497 *see also* metaphors
 - discourses 83–4
 - drama 172–4
 - English 112
 - ethnomusicology 416
 - multimodality 300, 304–5, 307–8
- Latham, Y. 136, 139
- Latour, B. 437, 439, 441
 - sociomateriality 134–9, 141, 144, 146–7
- laughter 302
- Law, J. 136, 437, 439, 441, 443–4
- leadership 65, 92–3, 172–3, 175, 182, 337
 - research 179
- Learmonth, M. 19, 22, 24, 158
- learning 71–72, 190, 267, 270, 277, 401
- learning opportunities 112
- Lee, Bill 103, 108
- Lee, Jennifer 161
- legacy 138, 266, 276–7
- legitimacy 70, 90, 128–9, 146, 439
- lens, as metaphor 493
- Leonardi, P. M. 84, 86, 90, 136–7, 143
- Lewis, P. 155, 164, 460
- life
 - like theatre 174–5
 - mutual interdependency 178–9

- revealed through theatre 177–8
- as theatre 175–7, 179–82
- limited realist 221
- Lincoln, Y. S. 118, 263, 275, 453
- linearity 496
- Linstead, S. 41, 68
- listening 73, 458
- literature 106, 119–20, 122, 172, 199, 230
 - metaphors 492–3, 500, 502
 - pattern matching 474–5, 478, 482
 - web images 282, 284
- Little Mermaid, The* 158–9
- locations 33–4, 86, 109, 143, 341
- Locke, K. 263, 492
- logos 52–53, 55, 87, 284
- logs, reflective 270–272 *see also* diaries
- London School of Economics 440
- Loznitsa, Sergei 336
- Lyotard, J-F. 64–5
- McDonald, S. 206–8
- McMurray, R. 272, 275
- McNeill, D. 301–2
- McNeil, R. 444–5
- Magna Carter (An Embroidery)* 379
- Maitlis, S. 92, 128, 325, 452–3
- Malchiodi, C. 264–5, 274, 276
- management 50, 172, 320, 419
- managers 157–8, 314
- Mangham, I. L. 171–3, 175–6, 180
- manipulation 49–50, 334
 - fiction 157–8, 161
 - photography 241, 255
 - web images 286–7
- Mannheim, Karl 440
- map-makers, as metaphor 492
- mapping (map-making) 442, 480, 500
 - interpretation (charts) 229
 - as metaphor 490
- maps, concept 472–3
- marginalization 67, 373
 - groups 249, 263–4, 275, 331, 336, 338
- marketing 119, 332, 393
- Markham, A. N. 285, 321, 394
- Martin, J. 48, 59, 66, 69, 157
- Mason, J. 366–7
- materiality 84, 94
- Matrix Analysis 229
- meaning 54, 273, 317, 319, 356
 - archival research 39, 42
 - netnography 386, 389
 - stories 65, 67
- meaning (meaning-making) 298–9, 308–9
 - business pitches 303–8
 - data collection 301–3
 - entrepreneurs 299–301
- mediums 196, 198
- Melody Time* 158
- memes 386
- memory 23, 241, 357, 358, 360
- Men and Women of the Corporation* 154
- metaphors 54, 315–7, 323–4, 486–7, 502–3
 - advantages and disadvantages 488–9
 - analogy fantasising 271
 - application example 499–502
 - guidelines 497–9
 - kaleidoscope 489–96
 - language 304–5
 - linear to kaleidoscopic view 496–7
 - meanings 487–8
 - work 488
- Metaphors We Live By* 487
- methodolatry 231–2
- metonymy 54
- Meyer, A. 270–1, 289
- Meyer, J. W. 69–70
- Meyer, R. E. 240, 247, 251–3, 292, 342
- Mieniczaowski, J. 177, 178, 184
- Mills, Albert 432, 436, 439, 445–6
- mindfulness 451, 481–2
- Minkler, M. 243, 249, 251
- mistake-making 401
- Mitchell, C. 263, 270–1, 275, 319
- Mitchell, S. 270–1, 274
- Mitchell, William 438
- modalities 273
- modernism 36
 - access 38
 - collection and storage 38–9
 - evaluation 39–40
 - evidentiary value 40
 - focus 37–8
 - triangulation 40–1
- modification, to templates 226
- Mol, A. 439, 441–4
- Monahan, T. 209, 214
- Monin, N. 53, 180
- montages 252
- Montreal School of Organizational Communication 93, 94
- Morgan, G. 487–9, 492
- Morgan, M. 270–2, 275, 276
- Morgan, S. 177, 178, 184
- Moser, Peter 405
- motherhood 24
- motivational techniques 337
- movement 143, 211–13
- multimodality 298–9, 308–9
 - business pitches 303–8
 - data collection 301–3
 - entrepreneurs 299–301
- multiplicity (history) 442–4
- Mumby, D. K. 84, 91–3
- Munkejord, K. 451, 455–7, 460

- mushroom picking, as metaphor 494
- music 334, 398, 401
 - autoethnography 405–7
 - community work 404–5
 - ethnographic fieldwork 400–3
 - factory work 403–4
- mutuality 73–4
- mutuality (mutual/shared affinity) 108–9
- Myers, G. 48, 124
- Myers, M. D. 39, 103, 107–8
- Myrick, K. 36, 432, 438, 445
- mystery creation, as metaphor 493
- myths 70–1, 386

- Nadin, S. 103, 188, 221, 224, 229–30
- narratives 23, 63–6, 91–2, 314, 320, 386
 - analysing 74
 - ANTI-history 437
 - drawing 263–4, 270–2, 274, 277
 - ethical considerations 75–6
 - identity 69–70
 - knowledge and learning 71–2
 - listening 73–4
 - myths 70–1
 - organizational 66–9
 - reflexivity 74–5
 - researching 72–3
 - senses 355, 361
 - sewing 382
 - shadowing 207–9
- narratives, reservoir of, as metaphor 492
- narratology 92, 207–9
- narrators 208
- negations, searching for, as metaphor 493
- neo-positivism 119–21
- Netherne Mental Asylum 264
- netnography 384–6
 - data collection and analysis 390–2
 - evolution 393–6
 - foundations 386–7
 - research ethics 392–3
 - research practices 387–90
- Netnography: Redefined* 387
- networks 135–6, 138, 210, 390, 452, 480
- New Deal 436
- Nichols, B. 330, 334, 336–8
- Nike Quilt* 374, 375
- Nossiter, V. 270–1
- Novitz, D. 172, 179

- obfuscation 49
- objects 86, 351, 409–10
- Oborn, E. 138, 145
- observational approach (filmmaking) 336
- observations 242, 408, 416
- ontology 440–2, 443
- organizational actors 207–8, 210–12, 355–6
- organizational discourse analysis (ODA) 82–3, 94
 - function 83–5
 - implementation 87–93
 - organizing, power and materiality 85–7
- organizations 51–8, 178, 190–1, 288–9, 358, 363–6
 - improvements 211
 - life 173, 175, 273–5, 353–4, 377
 - practices 210–14, 333, 338
 - smells 358–61
 - stories and narratives 66–9
 - structure 284, 374
- Organization Studies* 66
- Orlikowski, W. J. 86, 94, 284, 410
 - fiction 135–6, 138–41, 144–5, 147
- oscillation 439
- otherness 178, 457
- outcomes (outcome elements) 193, 495–6, 497
- Overington, M. A. 171, 175–6, 180–2
- overseers 157–8

- Pan American Airways 437, 444
- parallaxes 321–2
- parallel coding 225
- Parker, Cornelia 379
- Parker, L. 243, 245–6, 250, 292
- Parker, M. 156, 160, 163
- Parker, Rozsika 373–4, 377–80
- Parr, H. 337, 340, 342
- Parsons, Talcott 440
- participants 90, 124, 139, 223–4, 293 *see also*
 - audiences
 - drama 182, 191–8
 - drawing 263, 267, 271, 274, 276
 - emotions 455
 - interviews 106–8, 110, 208
 - photography 243, 249, 251–2
 - QCA 331, 333, 336–7
 - senses 350
- participation 389, 408–9
- participatory approach (filmmaking) 337
- passion 300
- path-making, as metaphor 495, 500
- pathos 52–3, 55, 87
- pattern matching 468–9
 - flexible 474–8
 - full 472–4
 - general logic 471–2
 - historical and philosophical roots 469–70
 - partial 478–83
- patterns
 - data 229, 417–18
 - themes 227
 - visual 253, 352
- Pauwels, L. 283, 285–6
- Pennebaker, J. W. 191, 193
- pentad, dramatisic 179–81
 - Forum Conversations 181–2

- Peräkylä, A. 302–3
- perception 470
- performance appraisals 85
- performances 107, 161, 209, 300, 401–2, 420
- ANTi-history 440–2
 - drama 172, 175–7, 182
 - emotions 460, 462–3
- performance texts 176
- performative approach (filmmaking) 338–9
- performativity 153–4, 182
- personal digital assistants (PDAs) 199
- perspectivalism 442
- perspectives 322, 337, 350–1, 356, 473
- narrative 208
- persuasion 49, 57, 68, 87, 118, 300, 330
- phenomena 471, 488
- Phillips, B. J. 323, 348
- Phillips, M. 373, 376
- Phillips, N. 85–6
- Phillips, Tom 389
- philosophy (philosophical position) 223
- photo-elicitation 240–1, 246, 249, 251–3, 351, 364
- exercise 291–2
- photographers 252
- photographic formats 241
- photographs 241, 252, 264, 283, 286, 355–6
- photography 239–40, 255–6, 264, 364
- analysis 250–3
 - ethics 253–5
 - field relations 249–50
 - heritage and drivers 240–1
 - hidden knowledge 243–5
 - holistic impressions 246–9
 - inventory function 245–6
 - performative 242–3
 - research design 241–2
 - tourist 250, 255
- Piasecki, T. M. 197, 199
- pilot studies 196
- Pink, S.* 262–3
- film making 339, 341
 - photography 241–2, 244–5
 - senses 349–52, 367
- Pinocchio* 155, 157–9, 162
- pitches, business 298–9, 308–9
- data collection 301–3
 - digital platforms 306–8
 - entrepreneurs 299–301
 - processing times 305–6
 - telephone calls 303–5
- Plato 48–9
- plausibility 53, 263, 442
- play therapy 118
- plots 64–5, 67, 179, 208
- Plowman, P. J. 189–91, 193–5
- poetry 21, 462
- point-making, as metaphor 500
- Poldma, T. 313–7
- politicians 301
- politics 65, 67–8, 357, 376, 378, 380, 444
- Port Talbot 283
- positivism 105, 119, 303, 431
- Postbop 406
- postmodernism 41–2
- Potter, J. 128, 208, 232, 494, 495
- power 53, 67, 127, 190, 444, 451
- autoethnography 23, 27
 - discourses 84–5, 90, 92–3
 - photography 249, 253, 255
- power relations 111–12, 336, 353, 410
- drama 172, 175
 - drawing 264, 275
- Pratte, Yves 443–4
- presentation 146, 284, 363, 461–3
- Princess and the Frog, The* 160–3
- princesses 154, 159
- Princess Mononoke* 154
- priori themes 225
- Pritchard, Katrina 283–5, 290–3
- probabilism 470
- problem solving 265
- proceduralism 231–2
- processes (process elements) 190–1, 210, 271, 492–5, 497
- procurement 50
- product design 361, 393
- projection 265
- propaganda 118
- Prosser, J. 251, 276, 301
- prosumers 285
- protocols 120, 253
- Protocols of the Elders of Zion, The* 41
- psychoanalysis 318–19, 378
- psychodrama 118
- psychology 265, 314, 320, 469–70
- psychotherapy 118
- publication 251, 253, 352, 367, 462 *see also*
- presentation
- punctum 247
- Putnam, L. L. 83, 85, 91, 487
- puzzle-solution pairs 303
- qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) 414–15, 427–9
- application example 425–7
 - background 415–19
 - management and business research 419–24
- qualitative diaries *see* diaries
- qualitative neo-positivist 221
- Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management* 233
- quantitative diaries 190
- Queen Bee 157–8
- queer theory 451
- questionnaires 105

- questions 72–3, 75, 104–6, 192, 194–6, 457
 quilts 365–6, 374–7 *see also* sewing
 Quinlan, E. 205, 206, 210–11
- racism 338
 Radcliffe, Laura S. 189–94, 196–8
 radical constructionist 221
 Ragin, Charles 414–19, 425
 Rakić, T. 329–31
 Ramirez, (border control agent) 453–5, 456, 458
 Ranciere, J. 247, 367
 rapport 108, 197, 270, 458
 rational thought (rationality) 177, 451
 ratios, pentadic 180, 181–2, 184
 Ray, J. L. 240, 241, 249
 readers 19, 352, 354 *see also* audiences
 reality creation, as metaphor 490, 492
 reality (realities) 42, 49, 122, 242, 444
 - drama 171, 175–6, 185
 - multiple 314
 - QCA 330, 338
 - stories 65, 69
- reasoning 470
 - inductive 53
- reassurance 270
 recollections 191–2
 recontextualization 289
 recording 195, 267, 408, 457–8 *see also* transcriptions
Recovering Lives 337
 recruitment 284
 redressive actions 179
 referee, as metaphor 494
 referentiality 92
 reflection 195, 266, 270, 272, 379, 390
 - personal 193
 - viewer's 338
- reflective approach (filmmaking) 337–8
 reflexivity 27, 122, 128, 155, 223–4, 442
 - drama 178, 182
 - emotions 451, 456–7, 460
 - ethnomusicology 405
 - metaphors 489, 496–7, 499
 - QCA 333, 340
 - senses 350, 352, 358–60, 367
 - stories 74–5
 - web images 285, 293
- reintegration 179
 relata 134
 relationalism 439–40
 relationality 134, 136
 relationships 53, 139, 224–5, 315, 322, 361
 - archival research 33, 36, 42
 - diaries 191
 - discourses 83–4
 - drawing 264, 271
 - field 249
 - film making 331, 336
 - interviews 105–6, 108–13
 - researchers/participants 451
 - shadowing 209–10
 - web images 285
- relativism 443
 relevance 472
 reliability 265, 419
 repertory grids 252
 replication logic 474
 re-positioning, as metaphor 501
 representation 27, 352
 representativeness 39, 43
 rescue 159–60, 163
Rescuers, The 156–7, 159
 research 455–6
 - agendas 271
 - diaries 194–8, 224
 - documentaries 33233
 - drawings 276–7
 - focus and objectives 350
 - group methods 127–9
 - methods 113, 493
 - philosophies 32–43
 - stories 72–6
- research designs 105–6, 194–5, 457–8, 493–4, 501
 researchers 120, 122, 124, 127, 139, 425
 - autoethnography 23, 27
 - collages 321
 - diaries 195
 - drama 185
 - drawing 266–7
 - emotions 453–5
 - fiction 155
 - film making 333
 - interviews 105–7, 110
 - metaphors 492, 498, 502
 - recruiting participants 196–8
 - senses 349–50, 353–4, 366–7
 - shadowing 207, 210, 213
 - stories 65–6, 73–5
 - thematic analysis 220, 224–5, 227–8, 230
- Research Methods Knowledge Base* 473
 research process, metaphorizing 486, 502–3
 - application example 499–502
 - guidelines 497–9
 - kaleidoscope 489–96
 - linear to kaleidoscopic view 496–7
- research questions 24–6, 229, 288, 291, 350, 352, 483
 research, sociomaterial 134–6
 - action 137
 - relationality 136
 - in-situ 137–8
- resistance 84, 92, 178, 211, 405, 408
 - stories 65–6, 68
- resources (jobs) 190, 240–1, 254, 263, 282
 respect 76, 253

- respondents 75 *see also* participants
 feedback 223
- responsibility 22, 56, 161, 275, 277
- result delivery, as metaphor 495
- retrospection 23, 192, 197
- revelation 365
- Rhazzali, K. 385, 393
- rhetoric 47–8, 87, 90
 organizational 51–8
 Plato 48–51
 reality 49–51
- rhetorical exercise, as metaphor 495
- rhetorical tropes, as metaphor 494
- rhetors 87 *see also* actors (actants)
- Riach, Kathleen 147, 351–2, 359–60
- Richardson, L. 19, 21, 457, 462–3, 495
- Ricoeur, P. 64–5, 488
- Rihoux, Benoît 414–19, 425
- Riley, S. 264–5
- Rippin, Ann 267, 350, 362–6, 373–6, B380
- risks, perceived 276
- Ritchie, J. M. 350–2, 359–61
- Rivera, Kendra D. 451–3, 455, 458–62
- Rodrigues, V. S. 118–20
- Roger and Me* 332
- Roig-Tierno 415, 419
- role distance 174
- role-play 127, 181
- roles 107–8, 154, 174, 210, 386, 500
- role traps 154, 157, 159, 163
- Rose, G. 253, 263, 273, 288, 291–2, 317–19
- Rostis, A. 34, 38, 41
- Rowan, B. 69–70
- Rowlinson, M. 33, 36, 376, 432
- Russell, Dorothy 377–8
- Sacks, Harvey 83, 90
- safety 159–60, 253, 254–5
- Samaritans 272–3
- Sambrook, S. 19, 24
- sampling (sample) 181, 197, 225, 249
 web images 290–1
- Schegloff, E. A. 302, 306
- Schmoor, Max 39
- Schwarzkopf, S. 35, 38–9, 43
- Scott, C. 245, 248
- Scott, J. 39, 43
- Scott, S. 93–4, 135–6, 141, 284
- search engines 388
- seductresses 157–8
- self 175, 178, 253, 265, 273, 320
 autoethnography 19, 21, 27
- self-awareness 193
- self-expression 276
- selfies 288
- semantic themes 227
- sensemaking 174, 252, 314, 386, 406
 discourses 91–2
 drawing 265, 267, 272–3
 emotions 452–3
 shadowing 210–11
 stories 66–7
- senses 147, 176–7, 244, 347–8, 366–8, 470
 multisensory research 363–6
 scent 358–61
 touch 361–3
 visual metaphors 352–7
 working complexities 348–52
- Seny Kan 415, 419
- sewing 372
 feminism 373–4
 MO research 380–2
 research 374–6
 subversion and politics 378–80
 women and history 376–8
- sexuality 23, 36
- shadowers 209, 210, 212
- shadowing 205–7, 214–6
 interruption of organization 213–14
 movement and real time 211–13
 relationships 209–11
 voice and perspective 207–9
- Shakespeare, William 171, 172
- Shannon, S. E. 460–1
- sharing 270, 286
- Shortt, Harriet
 drawing 263, 265, 267, 270–1, 274–5
 photography 240–3, 246, 249, 251–3
 senses 350–2, 363–4
- Shying, K. 451–2
- sight (sense) 352–7, 365
- silent speech (silences) 147, 247
- silver-handedness 362
- Silverman, D. 102, 232, 492
- simplicity, voluntary 481–2
- Sinclair, Amanda 348, 451, 495
- Sinkovics, Noemi 475, 478–81
- Sinkovics, Rudolf R. 415, 475, 478
- sites 86, 146–7 *see also* fieldwork sites
- Sleep Furiously* 334
- Sleeping Beauty* 159–60, 375
- Slutskaya, Natasha 241, 246, 250, 333, 339
- smart phones 199
- smell cards 359
- smell diaries 359
- Smet, M. 332–3
- Smircich, L. 118, 376, 437, 441
- Smith, A. D. 240–1, 249
- Smith, G. 317, 333
- Smith, P. 263–4
- snaplogs 251–2
- Snow White 154, 159, 163

- Snow White* 153, 156–60
 social change 255
 social competence 300
 social dimensions, interviews 107–9
 social drama 179
 social forces 417
 social inequality 338
 social interactions 173, 386, 387, 389–91
 socialization 401
 social media 284, 388
 social networks 210
 social psychology 51
 social sciences 416
 social value 475
 socio-cultural practices 93
 sociology 51, 240
 sociomateriality 133–6
 software 278, 359, 391, 425–7, 479–80
 soldiers 68, 69
 somatic work 359–60
 Sontag, S. 242, 357
 Sørensen, B. 245, 248, 350, 353, 356–8
 sounds 364
 sources, documentary 52, 172
 Southgate, E. 451–2
 spaces 143, 267, 274
 liminal 242, 253
 organizational 213, 353, 354
 Sparkes, A. C. 19
 sparring partnerships, as metaphor 492
 Spicer, A. 68, 84, 213
 stakeholders 177, 211, 263, 365, 462
 pattern matching 471, 474, 479
 Stanczak, G. C. 263, 463
 status 69, 158, 336
 images 288
 stereotypes 154, 324, 460
 stock images (photos) 289–90
 Stokke, Olav Schram 414–16
 storage, photographic 241
 stories 63–6, 207–9, 386, 442
 analysing 74
 ethical considerations 75–6
 knowledge and learning 71–72
 listening 73
 as metaphor 495
 myths 70–1
 narratives and identity 69–70
 organizational 66–9
 reflexivity 74–5
 researching 72–3
 story grids 321
 story-telling 331, 406, 453
 Strangleman, T. 240, 245
 Strati, A. 349–50, 353–6, 358, 411
 stress 190, 191, 244
 study sizes 229
 sub-headings 288
 subjectivity 84, 252, 351, 417, 451, 498
 drawing 263, 273
 emotions 456–7
 subversion 376
Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine, The 373, 378
 Suchman, L. 140, 146
 Suedfeld, P. 191, 193
Surname Viet Given Name Nam 338
 surveillance 387
 surveys 191
 suspicion 76
 sustainability 333, 475
 symbolism, presentational 246–7
 symbols 300, 386
 Symon, G. 109, 191–3, 198, 223, 251
 sympathy 108
 synecdoche 54
 talk 55, 58, 124, 126 *see also* conversations; discourses;
 discussions; interviews
 tapping device, as metaphor 494
 Tawney, R. H. 440
 taxonomies 105
 Taylor, J. R. 33, 84, 87, 91–4
 Taylor, S. 213, 276, 278, 314, 348
 drama 171, 173, 177, 184
 teaching practices 24
 techniques, drawings 271
 technology 86, 109, 330, 353, 386–7
 diaries 196, 199
 drawing 264, 277–8
 metaphors 499, 501
 sociomateriality 135, 137–8
 web images 285, 287
 template analysis 474–8
 textiles 264, 380–1
 maps 365–6
 texts 64, 284, 288, 353, 361, 480
 textuality 86, 147
 theatre
 as life 175–7, 179–82
 life revealed 177–8
 like life 174–5
 mutual interdependency 178–9
Theatre of the Oppressed 177
 The Body Shop 365–6
 thematic analysis 219–20
 account fragmentation 232
 Braun and Clarke's style 227–8, 234–5
 comparing generic styles 229–30
 Framework Analysis 228–9
 Matrix Analysis 229
 philosophical underpinnings 221–3

- proceduralism and methodolatry 231–2
- quality assurance 223–4
- strengths 232–3
- styles 220–1
- Template Analysis 224–7
- thematic frameworks 224
- themes 120–1, 155, 252, 293, 321–2, 425
 - interactive 226
 - senses 352, 364
 - thematic analysis 220, 223–6, 227–8
- theories 227, 470, 471, 493
- therapy, art 264–5, 276
- Thomas, P. 84, 93
- Thomas, R. 93, 273
- Through the Looking Glass* 51
- time 142, 211–13, 242, 274
 - lapses 191–2, 198
- Toms, E. G. 194, 196
- Tongues Reunited* 338
- top-down (pattern matching) 478
- topics, difficult (sensitive) 125, 127, 388
 - drawing 264, 270, 272, 275
- touch 361–2, 365
- Toulmin, Stephen 53–4
- tourism 331
- traces 436
- tracking 142, 288
- Tracy, S. J. 83, 223, 451–3, 455, 458–62
- trade unions 55–8, 86, 108, 112
- training 118, 177, 199
- tranference 265
- transcriptions
 - discourses 85
 - drawing 278
 - emotions 453
 - ethnomusicology 408
 - group methods 124–5, 128
 - multimodality 301
 - photography 251
 - rhetoric 55
 - snenses 352
 - symbols 309
 - thematic analysis 228
- transference 56
- transformations 139, 141, 162–3, 441
- translations 440, 441
- transparency 419
- trauma 75, 358
- triangulation 40–1, 43
- Trochim, William M. K. 120, 470–3, 479
- trust (building) 210–11, 249, 334
- truth
 - ANTI-history 442
 - autoethnography 27
 - drama 181, 185
 - drawing 270
 - effect 84
 - film making 330
 - group methods 128–9
 - interviews 110
 - metaphors 492
 - pattern matching 475
 - photography 243
 - rhetoric 49, 53
- truth tables 417, 418, 426, 427, 428, 429
- truth-telling 500
- Turner, Victor 173, 178–9
- turn-taking patterns 83
- UK Data Archive 255
- understanding 50
 - of cases 417
- union learning representatives (ULRs) 108, 112
- uniqueness paradox 66, 69
- University of Arizona 428
- University of Heidelberg 440
- University of Miami 444
- Urry, J. 441, 444
- Uses of Argument, The* 53–4
- utility 265
- validation 223
- validity 27, 55, 439, 472, 474
 - drawing 263, 265, 275
- Van Eerde, W. 189, 192
- Van Every, E. J. 84, 87, 91–2, 94
- Van Leeuwen, T. 247, 267, 289, 291, 300, 318
- Van Maanen, John 18, 451, 494–5, 501
- Vannini, P. 314, 359, 360
- Van Schalkwyk, G. J. 314, 320–1
- variable-oriented approach 417
- Vaughan, K. 313–15, 318, 321, 323
- ventriloquization (ventriloquism) 83, 94, 145
- verbal accounts 276
- verisimilitude 53
- Verstehen* 122
- Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) 380
- video recordings 85, 301
- viewers (spectators) 244, 248, 316, 318, 378 *see also* audiences
- Vince, R.
 - drawing 263, 270, 274, 277
 - photography 240, 250, 254
- voices, photo 249
- violence 24
- visual culture 264
- visual encoding process 271
- visual ethics 254
- visualisation 480
- visualisations of similarities (VOS) 480
- visual metaphors 316, 317, 319, 321–4
- visual presentations 462–3
- visual research 254
- visual turn 263–4
- vocabulary 138
- voiceover 334, 338

- voices 255, 272, 274
 - narrative 208
 - participants 263
- vulnerability 75, 156, 161, 455
- Waiting for the Warrior* 374, 375
- Walker, R. 53, 180
- Wang, C. 241–2, 249, 253, 255
- Ward, Jenna 263, 265, 267, 270–2, 274–5
- Warnes, S. 240, 242
- Warren, Samantha
 - drawing 263, 275
 - photography 240–1, 243–4, 246, 248–54
 - senses 347–9, 351–2, 359–60
- Waskul, D. 359, 360
- Watson, T. J. 27, 50–2, 54, 73
- Watts, S. 240–1, 244
- Wayland Barber, Elizabeth 373, 380–1
- weaving 381
- Weber, Max 432, 440, 445
- Weber, S. 270–1, 274
- web images 282–5
 - analysis 289–93
 - definition 285–9
 - properties 286–7
 - status 288–9
 - uses 287
- web media 285
- websites 388, 393
- Weick, Karl E. 179, 272, 452
 - discourses 84, 92
 - metaphors 487, 494, 496
 - pattern matching 471, 479
 - stories 64, 67
- welfare, emotional 275
- We Stand Surrounded by the Work of Thieves* 377
- Whiting, Rebecca 283–5, 290–3
- wholesomeness 106–7, 108, 111
- Wodak, R. 86, 93
- Wolff, R. 172–3, 175
- women 23, 244, 444
 - archival research 35, 41
 - drawing 267, 276
 - sewing 373–4, 376–8
- women's work 156–60, 373, 376, B381
- Women's Work: The First 20,000 Years* 373
- work 155–60, 190
 - Disney's characterisation 160–3
 - factories 403–4
 - invisible 210, 211
 - political 211
 - social class 501
- workaholism 24
- workers 403
 - age 282, 287–92, 338
- Working Woman* 267, 269
- work–life balance (issues) 191, 284, 333, 460–1
- workplace gossip 190
- Wren, D. A. 35, 436
- writers 51
- writing, research presentation 461–2, 495, 497, 500–2
- Yin, Robert 473–4
- youths (young people) 53
- Zadeh, Lotfi A. 416
- Zuboff, S. 270–271, 387